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ABSTRACT

This magazine addresses diverse educational issues in different parts of the world. Articles in this issue are: "Education for All: Governments Must Do Much More to Make Schooling Accessible for All Children" (G. Machel and N. Mandela); "Afghanistan: Education Opens Up New Perspective"; "South Korea: Behind the Facade" (W. van der Schaaf); "Kyrgyzstan: Providing Quality Education in Miserable Conditions" (S. N. Pyakuryal); and "Child Labour: ILO Global Report on Child Labour Cites 'Alarming' Extent of Its Worst Forms" (J. Somavia). The"Open and Distance Learning" section contains: "Introduction" (A. C. Armstrong); "Open and Distance Learning: Unlocking the Potential" (J. Daniel); "The Francophone Educational Channel: A Major 'Agence de la Francophonie' Program"; "National Situations: Chile (J. P. Urrutia) and Russia (N. Kolobashkin)"; "ICDE, International Council for Open and Distance Education" (R. Roll); "The Correspondence Course Goes Online: Comeback of an Educational Racket" (D. F. Noble); "Challenges for Teachers" (B. Ratteree); "Defining Terms"; "A Day at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria" (J. Delorme); "ICFTU General Secretary Guy Ryder"; "Girls' Education in Africa: FAWE's Action at the Grassroots (P. Mlama); and "Teachers at the Forefront of HIV/AIDS Global Prevention Efforts" (D. Sanglan). (BT)

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Dossier: Open and Distance Learning.

Fred van Leeuwen, Editor

Education International, Brussels (Belgium).

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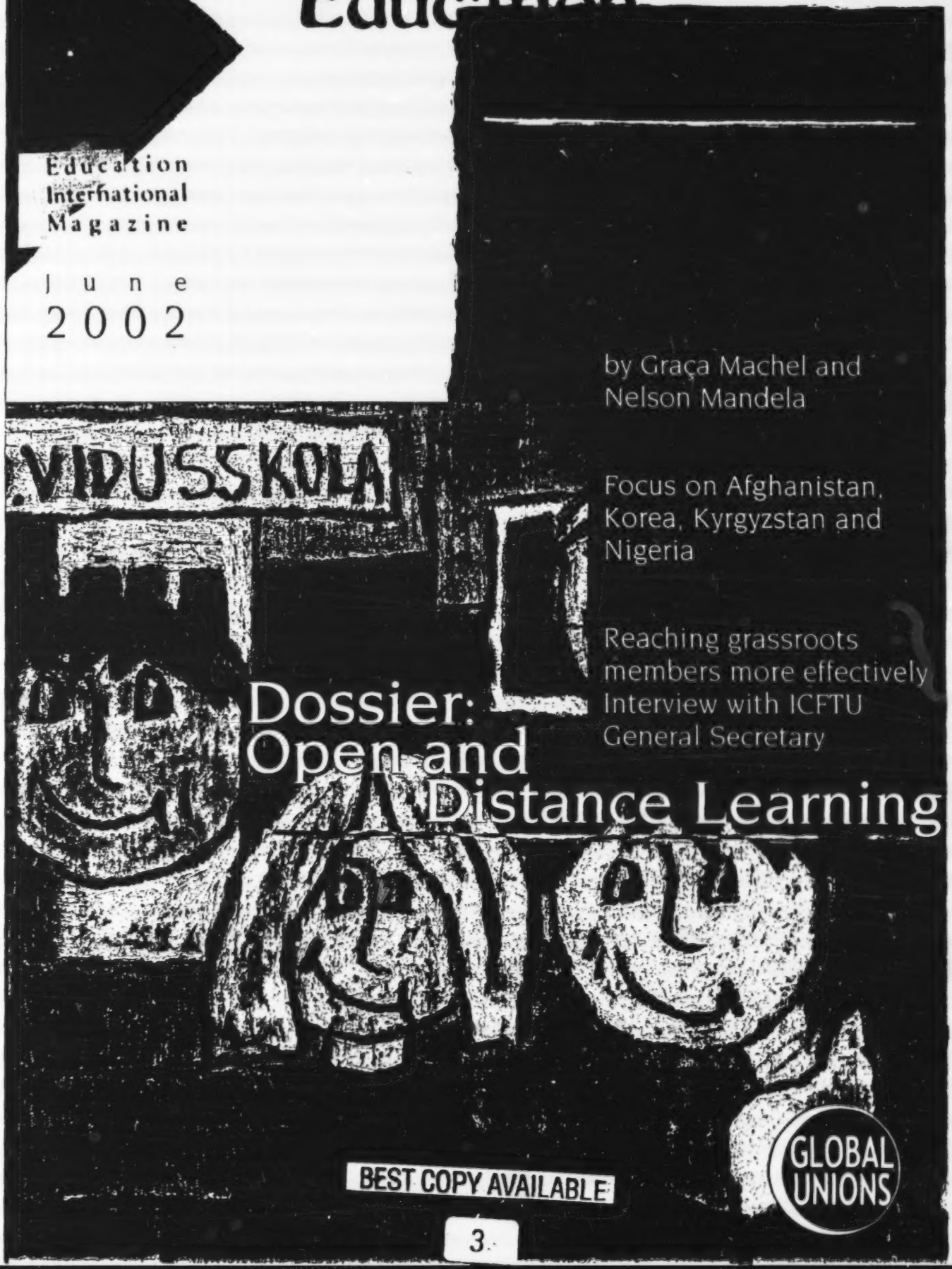
Education

Education International Magazine

June 2002



by Graça Machel and Nelson Mandela

Focus on Afghanistan, Korea, Kyrgyzstan and Nigeria

Reaching grassroots members more effectively Interview with ICFTU General Secretary

Dossier: Open and Distance Learning

GLOBAL UNIONS

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Drawing from Brence, 11, Latvia, for the Global Action Week

CONTENTS

AFGHANISTAN 1-2
Education opens up new perspective

SOUTH KOREA 4-5
Behind the façade

KYRGYZSTAN 6-7
Rampant poverty among teachers

CHILD LABOUR 8
ILO's alarming figures

DOSSIER 9-22
Vocational Education and Training
Contributions from
Ann Cheryl Armstrong, University of Sheffield UK; John Daniel, UNESCO DG for Education; Reider Roll, head of ICDE; David F. Noble, York University Canada, and Bill Ratteree, ILO Senior Programme Officer
Reports from Francophone Africa, Russia and Chile

A DAY ... 23
At the Ibadan University in Nigeria

ICFTU 24-25
Interview with the new General Secretary, Guy Ryder

PROFILE 26-27
FAWE, the Forum for African Women Educationalists

HIV/AIDS 28-29
Teachers at the forefront of prevention efforts

EDITORIAL

Is there a way to make school a really safe place?

Last April in Germany, a 19 year old student, stalking the classrooms of his school, methodically gunned down 17 people, including 14 teachers, two students and a police officer, at Gutenberg Gymnasium School in Erfurt, before killing himself.

Germany had already suffered school violence. In February, an expelled student murdered the headmaster before setting fire to his school in Freising, near Munich. A teacher, who was shot in the face, fortunately, survived his injuries. In March 2000, a 16-year-old student killed a teacher at a private boarding school in Bavaria before turning the gun on himself. He too was facing expulsion from the school. In November 1999, a 15-year-old student stabbed his teacher following a bet with classmates. He was sentence to 7 years in prison.

The United States has also been struck several times by school shootings: in April 1999, two students killed 12 of their classmates and a teacher at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, before killing themselves. One year before, in March, two boys aged 11 and 13 killed four evacuating pupils and a teacher after setting off fire alarms at Westside Middle School in Jonesboro, Arkansas.

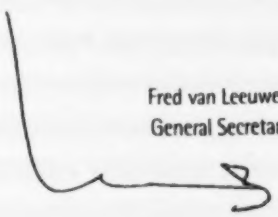
The Erfurt Gutenberg school was located in a fine building and had a good academic record. Its staff was decimated by the shooting. Roughly a quarter of the teachers were gunned down by the young man who came to school on a Friday with one intention: to kill as many teachers as possible. He had failed his Abitur (a graduation certificate exam) last year. He was due to re-sit the exams, but had been expelled in recent months for truancy and falsifying doctor's notes.

Could anything have been done to stop him? Should his mental instability have been spotted?

"What we need is a different learning environment, so that learning is related to motivation and creates joy. The strict focus on grades helps to create a feeling of powerlessness among students" stresses GEW's President and EI Executive Board member Eva Maria Stange.

American researchers who have analysed the nature of such incidents say that shooting sprees are not "impulsive" actions and are usually thoroughly prepared. Social scientists find that students who commit such crimes are generally teenagers who had been desperately unhappy for long periods of time, who had few friends, had kept to themselves, and were also bullied and picked on by other kids. It is important for parents, teachers, guidance counsellors, and friends to be aware, to watch for these clues and to report kids at risk. It may mean the difference between life and death in this difficult day and age.

The best hope for an answer lies surely with the development of this increased awareness. Moreover, as EI's affiliate in Japan, preoccupied by the problem of student suicides, points out, schools must not be examination factories; they must be places of human contact. Instead of alienation there must be a spirit of solidarity in the school community, a climate where students are encouraged to pay attention to others rather than to reject them. Introducing metal detectors, security staff or video surveillance in the schools, – or even worse arming teachers and other education personnel – would not be helpful and would not make sense. We cannot turn our schools into fortresses. Rather they must be living communities – and places of joy and hope.



Fred van Leeuwen
General Secretary

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Governments must do much more to make schooling accessible for all children

In April, during the Global Action Week, millions of parents, teachers and children across the globe called on their governments to provide free, good quality, basic education for all the world's children. They are part of the **Global Campaign for Education**: we add our voice to their call.

We know first hand what education can mean to a child: in our own lifetimes we have seen a generation of children armed with education lift up a nation. And our educations were a foundation from which we were able to take part in the historic events of our countries – the liberation of our peoples from colonialism and apartheid.

Education can make the difference between a life of grinding poverty and the potential for a full and secure one; between a child dying from preventable disease, and families raised in healthy environments; between orphans growing up in isolation, and the community having the means to protect them. Education is one of the most effective tools we have to promote prevention of HIV/AIDS and stop the spread of the pandemic. In times of peace, education can offer children ways to protect themselves – in times of war it can literally save their lives.

Yet there is an education crisis in the world today. 125 million children – two-thirds of them girls – do not have access to basic schooling. One out of every five children will never see the inside of a classroom. By allowing this we exclude these children from meaningful participation in society and we perpetuate cycles of poverty and inequality.

In many developing countries school fees are the barrier to getting children in school. Even in countries where primary education is meant to be free, the cost of buying books and uniforms means that many poor families simply cannot afford to educate their children. In Zambia, sending one child to primary school can cost a family one-fifth of their household income – it is not surprising then that more than half-a-million children in Zambia are not in school.

Governments must do much more to make schooling accessible for all children. On our own continent, Africa, national budgets often do not prioritise the basic needs of children – access to school, health care and clean water. Yet when our priorities and commitments are clear, the response can be tremendous. In Malawi, primary school enrolment soared by 50% following the government's decision to eliminate school fees and mandatory uniforms in 1994. Malawi is now one of the few countries in the world with gender parity in primary school enrollment. Yet these achievements have worsened the ongoing struggle for adequate resources to fund education, as schools are now overwhelmed with pupils.

At the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, governments and donor organisations reaffirmed their commitment to achieving universal primary education by 2015. Developing countries promised to establish education for all (EFA) plans that would include provision for free schooling for primary school children. The international community promised that "no country seriously committed to education for all will be thwarted in their achievements of this goal by lack of resources." Two years on, many countries that have drawn up education plans are not receiving the support promised. Pakistan's education minister Zobeida Jalal cites a lack of resources as an "insurmountable barrier to EFA throughout the South Asia region."

We live in a $30-trillion plus global economy – we have the resources. Last year the world spent almost twice as much on defence as on education – in some regions four times as much. An estimated $1 billion is being spent each month on the military actions in Afghanistan alone. To meet global targets for universal access to education, a gap of at least $5 billion per year must be filled. If we are serious about fighting ignorance, disease, poverty – and building a world fit for our children – we must be as diligent about finding the resources to fund the educational, health and social well-being of our children as we are about finding resources to defend our nations in other ways.

We – civil society and the private sector – must also play our part. Citizens of industrialised countries can hold their governments and donor institutions accountable for their promises to provide the necessary resources to fund universal education. Citizens in developing countries must ensure that their governments have created and put in place strong education plans. Civil society groups and the private sector can form partnerships with governments to pump resources into education provision.

If we do not achieve the goals for universal education, we not only fail to meet our commitments as governments, communities and citizens, we also fail our children. All children have the right to learn.

Nelson Mandela and Graça Machel are renowned child right advocates. Mr Mandela is former President of South Africa, and founder of the Nelson Mandela Foundation and Nelson Mandela Children's Fund. Building schools is a key activity of the Foundation. Mrs. Machel is a former education minister in Mozambique and founder of FDC, a community-development foundation, a primary function of which is to provide educational support to girls. They are leading the Global Leadership Initiative, part of the Global Movement for Children.

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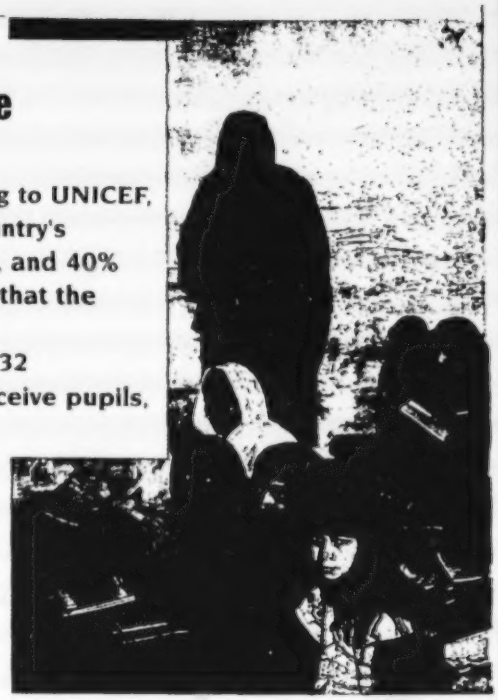
Education opens up new perspective

Schools re-opened in Afghanistan on 22 March. According to UNICEF, there are 4 million children of school age. 80% of the country's educational establishments have been entirely destroyed, and 40% of teachers died during the various wars. It is estimated that the country needs 100,000 new teachers immediately. A new administration is trying to establish itself in the country's 32 provinces, but it does not have the resources either to receive pupils, or to pay or train teachers.



At the Wazir Akbar Khan primary school in Kabul, 1500 pupils (both boys and girls) went back to school on 22 March, and squeezed into the 27 classrooms provided for the 1st to the 9th grades. On the Shamali Plain, a front-line zone north of Kabul, the inhabitants are beginning to return and settle, initially in tents until rebuilding gets under way. The Plain has been entirely devastated, towns and villages have been destroyed, vineyards have been burned, orchards have been demolished, and irrigation channels have been damaged. In the midst of this mayhem, a primary school is still standing, although in need of repair. At Mazar-e-Charif, 300 female students have enrolled in the Faculty of Medicine: the resumption of lessons sends out a message of hope for both girls and boys.

A huge challenge

Over years of successive conflicts and governments, teachers, like the population at large, have been seriously affected, suffering death, exile in bordering countries or in the west, and displacement within Afghanistan itself. At the present time, no proper census can say exactly how many teachers there are in the country, although, on the basis of a survey conducted in 2000, UNICEF estimates that there are 21,000 teachers working in state schools. Before the Taliban came to power, at least 60% of teachers were women (80% in primary schools), but during the time of the Taliban government, female staff were sacked and girls were excluded from school. Women teachers, therefore, have not been paid for five years, and the men, like all Afghan civil servants, have not been paid for many months.

In material terms, no overall review has been carried out either by UNICEF or by the Afghan Ministry of Education. However, it is estimated that almost 80% of educational establishments have been completely destroyed, or are extremely dilapidated, the remaining 20% are in a poor state of repair. Very few establishments have minimum facilities (e.g. running water, toilets and electricity) or basic education equipment (e.g. tables, chairs, blackboards, exercise books, books and pencils).

Refurbishment, reconstruction, building and equipment needs are therefore immense, not only as far as existing establishments are concerned, but also in respect of the educational needs of a population that includes a large number of children and young people.

During the time of the Taliban government, many schools were turned into Koranic schools for boys known as *madrasas*, where the education of girls was banned; however, educational activities nonetheless continued (secretly, in the case of girls) with support from NGOs and associations. Lessons were given in private houses by teachers working at the risk of their lives.

Since the fall of the Taliban régime, despite the fact that the three winter months count as a holiday period, catch-up sessions have been organised in jam-packed, freezing, damp classrooms in those school buildings that can receive pupils.

Devastation of human and material resources

Hamid Karzai's provisional government includes a Minister of Education, Rasool Amin, and a Minister of Higher Education, Sharif Fayez, but there is no administrative or finanical support for functioning. The two Ministries are represented by an Education Directorate in each of the 32 provinces, but here too, it is more a question of outward display than administrative reality. Administrative structures still have to be rebuilt. As the Education Minister bluntly told the official representative of the French Minister of Education when she was in Afghanistan in January, '*I am at the head of an empire with no troops and no money.*'

The education system has undergone numerous upheavals over the last 20 years, with wars and successive governments resulting in a system-wide breakdown, and everyone doing a little bit of what they wanted and what they could. Hence, the current insistence of the current Ministers to rebuild a homogeneous system, and to restore a national curricula with course books used by all Afghan pupils.

The EI Solidarity Fund welcomes contributions for our work in Afghanistan. Donations can be sent to account # 310- 1006170-75 with Banque Bruxelles Lambert, 157 Bd Anspach, 1000 Brussels, Belgium.

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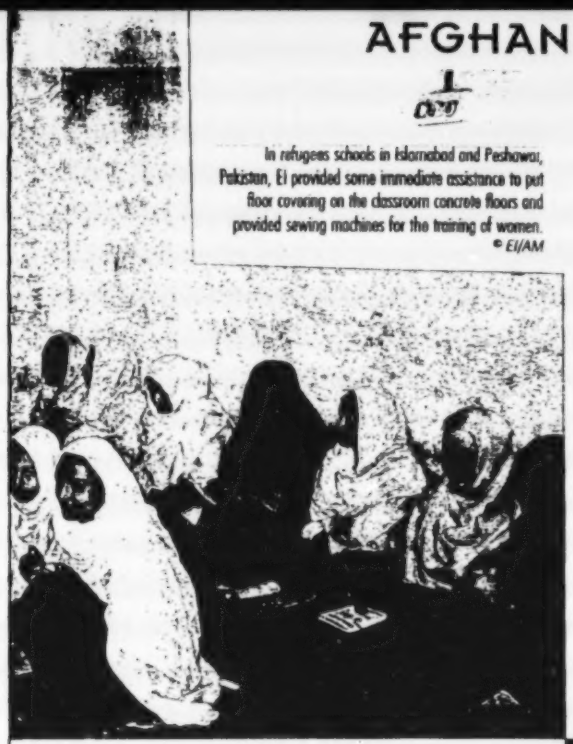
AFGHANISTAN



In refugees schools in Islamabad and Peshawar, Pakistan, EI provided some immediate assistance to put floor covering on the classroom concrete floors and provided sewing machines for the training of women.
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cational establishments. Of course, it will not be the Ministry that will rebuild all Afghan schools, but for the pupils and teachers concerned, each micro-project represents an effective achievement that will enable them to pick up their lives again full of hope.

UNICEF is producing about a million copies of basic learning materials which we were told would be treated as supplementary educational material. However this may be the only material available to begin with.

Teacher training

This is an important area of work that the Minister of Higher Education is keen to open up quickly. At the present time, there is no vocational training for primary teachers who go into teaching after completing their twelve years' schooling; in fact, many teachers do not even go beyond the first six years. As for secondary teachers, they receive four years' training at a teacher training institute: there are 14 of these in the country altogether, but some have been destroyed or badly damaged in the course of successive conflicts. The Minister of Higher Education wants to set up a 'teacher training university' based in Kabul with branches in other towns and cities.

The Minister took a decision to have one curriculum in two languages (Pashtun and Dalit) to help rebuild national unity. Not all teachers are familiar with this curriculum. Some would prefer to return to the curriculum used prior to the Russian occupation. This does not make much sense since it would be over 25 years old and would require major revision. There is an attempt now to revise the 1990 curriculum.

The primary and secondary curricula extend over 12 years from the 1st to the 12th year. 6 years of primary followed by 6 years of secondary, in 2 levels of 3 years each. A distinction is drawn between high schools, which include all 12 years of teaching, and schools that offer either 6 years (primary) or 9 years (primary plus college). Pupils attend these schools in two, or sometimes three, waves a day. According to UNESCO the pupil teacher ratio is about 1:190.

Vocational training also needs to be built up again. It used to be provided in certain technical schools (e.g. teaching mechanics, telecommunications, agriculture and electricity), but many have been destroyed or badly damaged.

A massive amount of reconstruction – including material, human and pedagogical reconstruction – is needed, and the Afghan government is relying on international (i.e. bilateral, multilateral and NGO) aid.

The issue of basic education comes at the top of the list. In a country with a high illiteracy rate and a large number of children, education for all is clearly a requirement and an objective to be achieved as quickly as possible. A resumption in the education of young women and girls, at least half of whom have not been to school or university at all in the last five years, is also a crucial issue.

To help realise these objectives, work is needed on the refurbishment, reconstruction and equipment of educational establishments.

After years of fighting and insecurity, the reconstruction of the education system will provide a solid basis for stability in Afghanistan, and will ensure respect for one of the most fundamental rights of all children. ◆

Two EI missions have already focused on the Afghan teaching community. The first mission in January to Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan was to clarify the resumption of education in Afghanistan and assist the teachers of Afghanistan in establishing their own independent and democratic trade union structure.

EI Deputy General Secretary Sheena Hanley and Chief Co-ordinator Asia Pacific, Aloysius Mathews met with Afghan refugees in Pakistan and held discussions with intergovernmental agencies and NGOs working with refugees from January 28 to February 5, 2002. In refugee schools in Islamabad and Peshawar, Pakistan, EI provided some immediate assistance to put floor covering on the classroom concrete floors and provided sewing machines for the training of women.

The second mission, this time in the Afghan capital Kabul from 19 to 24 April, helped establish the long-term program of training both for union development and for professional activities. No teacher association or union exists at present in Afghanistan. There have been some loose groupings of teachers in Pakistan generally around the school or community they are in. It does not extend beyond this, although many changes will continue to take place that will have an impact on teachers' lives, hence the efforts of EI to help organise teachers.

A workshop was held to develop a constitution for the Afghanistan Teachers Union. Discussion focused on how to draft a constitution and prepare a constituent congress.

Contacts have also been made with the Minister of Education about teacher training. The Minister wants unified training which is understandable but this will take time to organise and immediate training is needed. Special training will have to be provided for women teachers by women teachers at least in the early stages.

The EI second mission also finalised the arrangements for the production and distribution of 20 000 school kits for children in Afghanistan. EI will also take up the issue of twinning university professors with colleagues in other parts of the world. University professors are keen to make links after having been cut-off from research and information for so long. EI will also encourage higher education unions to fundraise to help re-equip the university.

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The 19th EI Executive Board adopted a resolution on Afghanistan : www.ei-ie.org

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Behind the façade

Korea is hosting the World Cup Soccer, jointly with Japan. A major sporting event where Korea intends to show the world all the good it harbours: the magnificent countryside, 5,000 year-old traditions, its food, temples and hospitality. Few spectators will be exposed to the plights of dozens of trade unionists sentenced for the crime of being a unionist.

Monday, March 18, at 2 p.m. Dan Byung-ho stood before a criminal court in Seoul, the capital of the Republic of Korea. He is President of the dynamic trade union confederation KCTU[1]. The charges brought against him include speaking out at rallies and supporting workers on strike. Above all, he is held personally responsible for the fights that broke out between the massively present police forces – a provocation in itself – and some of the demonstrators. Found guilty, Byung-ho was sentenced to two years imprisonment.

Dan Byung-ho has not been the only one convicted. More than 50 other trade union leaders are in prison, serving sentences of up to 5 years. An even larger number remains in hiding, in order to avoid arrest. The police forces guard the offices of the Trade Union Centre 24 hours a day. Just days after sentencing President Byung-ho, a warrant for arrest was issued for eight other national leaders of the Confederation.

On March 25, some 1000 riot police disrupted the inaugural congress of the Korean Government Employees Union. From the 268 delegates present at the congress, 192 were arrested. The Public Services International General Secretary, Hans Engelberts, who was a key speaker at the KGEU congress, witnessed the repression. *"The police attacked participants viciously"*, he said.

On 1 April, the Korean government dismissed two teachers' union leaders who had led a demonstration in October 2000 protesting against the government's decision not to implement the collective agreements reached by the Education Ministers and the unions. The next day, the Korean government summoned the leadership of EI's affiliate Chunkyojo to investigate last years' struggles.

In 2001, the Korean government fined 64 union leaders who had participated in demonstrations – to protest about the lack of implementation of this collective agreement – for violating the "Law on Assembly and Demonstration" and the "Law on Punishment of Acts of Violence". Union leaders and teachers are also charged under the "Law on Punishment of Acts of Violence" and the "Law on Business Interference".

OECD Member since 1996

In December 1996, Korea joined the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Korea was given the benefit of the doubt when the government promised *"to bring its regulations on industrial relations in line with the internationally accepted standards, including those covering basic human rights, such as freedom of association and collective bargaining."*

Freedom of association is still a far away dream for thousands of workers. While teachers achieved the right to organise, civil servants are still banned from forming unions. Police forces come out in droves to prevent unionists from meeting.

Is this the image of a democratic republic? Is this the country led by President Kim Dae Jung, a Nobel prize-winner? It looks like the Republic of Korea has a double-faced mask expressing a Sunshine policy smile on one side for their North Korean neighbour, while grim repression snarls against it own unionists, seeking to promote the interests of the workers.

"The KCTU President broke the law" is the shallow response from the Minister of Labour to a Global Unions delegation[2]. *"And those who break the law will face trial."* He did not mention that these laws were created by the military regimes and date back to a pre-democracy era. The delegation pointed out that it is absurd that the current government wants to defend democracy using anti-democratic means.

Guarantee a climate appealing to investors

The Minister of Labour revealed the real truth when he stated that the Government of Korea wants to guaran-

The EI Executive Board, meeting in April 2002, adopted a resolution reinforcing the resolution adopted on Korea at the third Congress in July 2001, which urged for the release of teachers arrested during demonstrations. The July 2001 resolution also urged the Korean government to revise the laws on private schools.

Concerned with the developments in 2002, the EI Executive Board:

1. Urges the Korean government to respect the agreements reached through collective bargaining with teachers' unions;
2. Condemns the harassment of union leaders and private school unionists (teachers);
3. Calls for the recognition of the Korean Professors Union;
4. Demands the reinstatement of dismissed leaders and private school teachers;
5. Calls for a revision of the "Law on the Establishment and Operation of Trade Unions for Teachers", so as to guarantee collective action and freedom of association for professors.

[1] The Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, affiliated to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU).

[2] The international trade union delegation composed 20 trade union organisations from 8 countries, and 5 Global union federations – including Education International – as well as the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC).

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FRUITFUL DEBATES IN THE KOREAN TEACHERS UNION

"Chunkyojo has a very interesting decision-making process, you should inform your member organisations about it," said EI Executive Board Member Kim Ji-Ye (photo), when in Brussels for the 19th Executive Board of EI.

Each year, a broad consultation of the whole constituency is organised in January and February to determine the policy to follow. Seminars are organised for the activists at the local, districts and national levels. At each stage, the achievement of the previous year are discussed and evaluated and new strategies are suggested.

"Last year, Chunkyojo succeeded in launching the campaign "Quality Public Education For All" and in resisting the educational policy based on neo-liberalism", says Kim. On October 26-27, over 20,000 teachers came to Seoul from all over the country to request the government to disengage in neo-liberal policies. The motto was 'resist commercialisation of education and secure an education budget'.

A recent success of Chunkyojo was the campaign to resist the incentive bonus (premiums related to performance). The teachers' union has always strongly opposed the merit premiums awarded to civil servants. *"Chunkyojo felt the bonus opened the door to contractual and annual salary system which would classify teachers into levels and lead to wage flexibility,"* insists Kim. Over 85,000 teachers decided to return the monetary bonus to the Education Minister. Chunkyojo collected voluntary returns that amount to an impressive USD 30 million. On October 10, 2001, Chunkyojo held a National Action Rally to return the money. Meetings were held across the country in more than 50 places. About 15,000 teachers left school early and assembled in front of the Education Ministry to deposit the bundles of banknotes there.

"Teachers will not exchange their social status and pride for a little money," states Kim proudly. The government promised to change the bonus system.

tee a climate appealing to foreign investors. To that end, the government wants to weaken the unions since they do not go along with restructuring or privatisation plans, which may be good for profit but bad for workers. In the education sector, the government wants to increase the percentage of temporary workers to 30%, as these workers can easily be controlled because they live in constant fear of being dismissed.

The Korean trade unionists will be in jail when the world watches the World Soccer Cup match. KCTU President Byung-ho and his colleagues will see the games from their cells. They are invisible behind the colourful Korean façade of public relations. Behind that façade there is a grim reality of state control, suppression and violations of trade union rights.

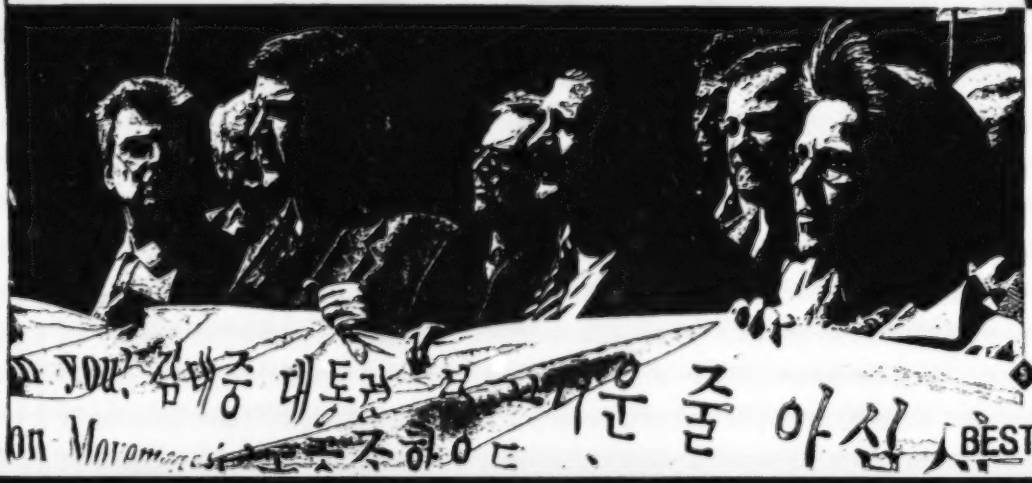
EI will continue to support the right of all workers, including civil servants, to form free trade unions in line with ILO international labour standards. ◆

Wouter van der Schaaf
EI Co-ordinator

Last March, a large international trade union delegation– including Education International – travelled to Korea to protest about grim repression against trade unionists.

President Kim Dae Jung, Shame on You, says the poster showing violent arrests of trade unionists.

The president of Chunkyojo (Korea Teachers Union), Ms. Yi Soo Ho, was on hunger strike earlier this year in solidarity with the 51 trade unionists currently in jail for their strike against the privatisation of the power company. In his words, "All workers in Korea should be united on this issue. Since these issues hit workers in all sectors alike. Today I am in support of the workers in the power industry. Tomorrow they will support us in our efforts against the sell-out of the education sector as part of increasing commercialisation."



Providing quality education in miserable condition

Kyrgyzstan is a small, resource-poor country among the Central Asian States with a population of 4.8 million. 70% of the youth below age of 30 are unemployed. Teachers receive about USD10 per month. Schools are in poor condition. Parents face difficulties in supporting their children's education and the dropout rate is very high. The +160,000 member strong teachers union of Kyrgyzstan became a member of EI in 2000.

- % of government expenditure on education: 25.2%
- GDP per capita: US$ 390 (Kyrgyzstani figure);
- 40% of its GDP is agriculture;
- 66% of the population live in villages;
- 60% live below the poverty line (US$ 7 / month);
- Literacy rate: 96 %;
- Life expectancy : 63.1 for men, 71.2 for women
- Infant mortality (%) : 26.2

Data Sources: National Human Development Report (1998).

Kyrgyzstan has a predominantly agricultural economy. Industrial exports include gold, mercury, uranium, and electricity. The country, which is land-locked, has limited natural resources and is difficult to penetrate. About 93% of its surface is covered by and mountains.

"I have been teaching for 23 years to pupils from 6 to 10. I am the single mother of two students. Without the help of my parents, we would not survive with my monthly wage of 800 som (16 USD)," explains Tatiana Perederigb. *"I love very much my school and the pupils but I cannot make ends meet. Food is very expensive and we never eat meat or eggs."*

The war against terrorism in the region has contributed further to the increase of defence and law enforcement spending at the expense of social programs. The government claims the poverty level has been reduced by almost 5% in 2001 due to vigorous efforts to promote social mobilisation combined with an expansion of microcrediting programs, involving about 100,000 people. Still poverty remains at a dramatic 50-60%.

Rampant poverty

"Many children do not attend school because their parents are poor, unemployed or alcoholic," notes Natalia Leonenko, 47, teacher in Mikhaylovka in the province of Issyk-Kul. *"Many children help their parents at home by taking care of the cattle and farming. A lot of kids are left on their own."*

Kyrgyzstan, however had a trong tradition of educating its citizens. School attendance is mandatory through grade nine (15 years of age). According to UNESCO figures, literacy rate reached 97% in 1994 and the percentage of gross enrolment in secondary education was 89% for girls and 84% for boys.

In the immediate post-independence period, privatization was promoted and proliferation of political parties and NGOs took place in Kyrgyzstan. The separation of powers is more highly developed in Kyrgyzstan than anywhere else in Central Asia. Opposition political parties are represented in parliament, even though the political party system is weakly developed. There are many independent NGOs, including human rights monitoring groups, which function in relative freedom, testifying to the rise and influence of civil society. Although the number of NGOs is growing rapidly (various sources show up to 1,200 NGOs), a large part of the population remains uninvolved.

There is a general trend towards tighter government control. New customs regulations limit items that may be brought into Kyrgyzstan. Among those banned are books. *"We have a lack of textbooks,"* deplores Natalia, *"and what we have are not adapted to the age of our pupils. Teachers cannot even subscribe to local newspapers, and I am not even mentioning access to Internet! We are very isolated from the rest of the world and this impacts on the quality of the education we provide."*

Human rights concerns are focused on the north-south divide, nationality issues, and privatization, which have caused serious national minority violations. In 1990, violent clashes between Uzbeks and Kyrgyz competing for land and housing left hundreds dead. Kyrgyz fears Uzbek hegemony. Uzbekistan controls Kyrgyzstan's supply of natural gas and periodically turns it off. Kyrgyzstan, for its part, controls a good part of Uzbekistan's water supply but has shown little inclination to risk playing tit for tat.

Education system

According to the Ministry of Education, the education system in the country is trying to shift from Soviet design to a new era of learning. One of the main goals of the reform is the creation of new, democratic forms of management, based on the principles of academic freedom, honesty and critical and analytical thinking.

The ambitious program to restructure the old Soviet system has been hampered by low funding and loss of teachers. Some 2 million ethnic Russians moved back to Russia between 1992 and 1995, which has caused an enormous deficit of teachers, doctors and engineers. *"The lack of teachers is a real problem,"* says Natalia Leonenko, who heads the teachers' union at her school. *"Many teachers turn to other jobs because of the very small salary and difficult conditions. Young graduates do not want to become teachers. For the last two years, we have been paid regularly and the union had to struggle hard. I am worried about my retirement. Women have to retire at 50 and I will not get more than 10 dollars per month."*

The 1993 constitution guarantees free basic education at state institutions to all citizens. The Ministry of Education is the central administrative body of the national system. The ministry is divided into departments for general education, higher education, and material support. Below the ministry level, the education hierarchy includes the six provinces and the separate city of Bishkek. Representatives from each provide input to the ministry on local conditions. The level of basic local administration is the district education officer.

Basic education is financed from district budgets. College and higher education programs are financed by the national budget. School principals negotiate their requirements with district officials, but the central gov-

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ernment sets norms based on previous expenditures and on the relative resources of the provinces. "*Our school was built nine years ago. It is considered a new building but it needs urgent repair, but local authorities say they have no money.*" says Natalia from Mikhaylovka. "*The school is big enough, it has three floors but walls on the second floor are damp and the gym and meeting hall are in very bad condition. The wooden floor of the canteen is also wet. It is very cold in the school.*"

The school year is 34 weeks long, extending from the beginning of September until the end of May. The instruction week is 25 hours long for grades one through four and 32 hours for grades five through eleven. Because of a shortage of schools, 37% of general education students attend schools operating in two or three shifts. Construction of new facilities has lagged behind enrollment growth, the rate of which has been nearly 3% per year.

In 1992 about 960,000 students were enrolled in general education courses, 42,000 in specialized secondary programs, 49,000 in vocational programs, and 58,000 in institutions of higher education. About 1,800 schools were in operation in 1992. That year Kyrgyzstan's state system had about 65,000 teachers, but an estimated 8,000 teachers resigned in 1992 alone because of poor salaries and a heavy work load that included double shifts for many. Emigration also has depleted the teaching staff.

Post-Soviet curriculum reform has aroused much controversy in Kyrgyzstan. A fundamental question is the language of instruction, which has become increasingly Kyrgyz as non-indigenous citizens leave the country and textbooks in Kyrgyz slowly become available. The Ministry of Education has held competitions, supported by foreign donations, for the design of new textbooks in Kyrgyz. Many groups organize schools in the language of their ethnic origin.

In 1992 the first major curriculum reform provided for mandatory foreign language study (English, French, or German) beginning in grade one; computer science courses in grades eight through eleven (a program hampered by lack of funds); and the replacement of Soviet ideology with concepts of market economy and ethnic studies. The reformed curriculum requirements also leave room for elective courses, and instructional innovation is encouraged. ♦

THE ETHNIC SPARK

Kyrgyz constitute about 58% of the country's population, Russians 18% and Uzbeks about 14%. Minority groups have voiced deep concerns about the practical consequences of the Kyrgyz national renaissance. In addition to ethnic tensions, the country is divided into north and south by high mountains. The southern part of the country is heavily populated by Uzbeks and is more traditional, rural, and Islamic. The more urbanized and westernized northerners have traditionally ruled the country.

After the collapse of the USSR, the economy has slackened further. With the general decline in living standards and rising costs, even a minor spark could ignite a conflagration between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks competing for slices of the same, shrinking pie. In the period of the USSR, about 14% of marriages were inter-ethnic but it has now dropped to one percent.

The government has grown more concerned about Islamic and non-Russian Orthodox Christian congregations. The government created a new State Commission on Religious Affairs. All religious organizations are required to register with the Commission. Kyrgyz government officials and the Muftiat (Spiritual Directorate of Muslims) are concerned about the spread of fundamentalist Islam.

Kyrgyzstan (officially called the Kyrgyz Republic) became independent in 1991. It is a secular state. Its neighbours are China, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan

The Trade Union of Education and Science Workers of Kyrgyzstan

The EI member organization in Kyrgyzstan is TUESWK, which represented +160,000 members in 2000. About 68,500 members are from the primary and secondary levels, 27,000 are from higher education, about 17,000 are teachers of culture and sports and 1,250 are from the pre-school level. There are about 47,000 student members and 1,650 non-teaching members. Membership due is 1% of the salary and is collected by a check-off system.

TUESWK was created in 1925 and functioned as a branch of the Teachers' Unions of the Soviet Union. In 1990, after the independence of the Kyrgyzstan, the union was legally registered in the country. It is an independent and democratic organization with all decisions and elections determined by the delegates' congress and other elected committees. The first Congress was held in 1990 and two more have been convened since then.

The TUESWK is affiliated to the Federation of Trade Unions of Kyrgyzstan. The TUESWK office has 9 full time staff and a president. The union aims to promote education, to improve teachers' status, and protect teachers from social and legal problems. The union structure comprises of a Presidium, 5 Provincial Committees, 2 Provincial Councils, 57 Municipal and Regional Committees and 2,377 Institution Committees.

In March 2001, EI held a seminar on the "Role of Teachers' Organisations in Improving Education and the Status of Teachers" for the leaders of the TUESWK. The seminar dealt with the role of teachers' unions in a market economy, organization and administration of an effective teachers union, leadership, decision-making, and Quality Education For All. The seminar also discussed the problems of teachers, students, education, problems of child labour, gender inequalities and human and trade union rights.

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ILO Global Report on child labour cites "alarming" extent of its worst forms

Ten years after launching a worldwide campaign against child labour, the International Labour Office (ILO) issues a landmark global study showing that despite "significant progress" in efforts to abolish child labour, an alarming number of children are trapped in its worst forms.

The ILO report "A Future Without Child Labour"[1], found that 246 million children – one in every six children aged 5 to 17 – are involved in child labour. Among its startling new findings, the report also says that one in every eight children in the world – some 179 million children aged 5-17 – is still exposed to the worst forms of child labour which endanger the child's physical, mental or moral well-being.

"*Despite the increasing commitment by governments and their partners to tackle child labour worldwide, it remains a problem on a massive scale*," said Juan Somavía, Director-General of the ILO. Child labour continues to be a global phenomenon – no country or region is immune, the report says. A wide range of crises – including natural disasters, sharp economic downturns, the HIV/AIDS pandemic and armed conflicts – increasingly draws the young into debilitating child labour, including illegal and clandestine forms such as prostitution, drug trafficking, pornography and other illicit activities.

246 MILLION CHILDREN ARE involved in child labour which the ILO says should be abolished. These forms include:

- Work performed by a child under the minimum age specified for a particular kind of work by national legislation or international standards;
- Hazardous work that jeopardises the physical, mental or moral well-being of a child, either because of its nature or the conditions in which it is performed; and,
- "Unconditional" worst forms of child labour as defined in the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, No. 1872.

While there has been significant progress towards the effective abolition of child labour, the international community still faces a major uphill struggle against this stubbornly pervasive form of work that takes a tragic toll on millions of children around the world.

Juan Somavia
ILO Director-General

The shape of the problem

The figures in the new ILO report differ from the previously accepted estimate of some 250 million working children aged 5-14 in developing countries – the best estimate possible in 1996. The report notes that the latest methods to gather data provide a more precise picture of the problem of child labour, its distribution among regions and between age groups. Drawing on recent survey data, it says an estimated 352 million children aged 5 to 17 are currently engaged in economic activity of some kind.

Of these, some 106 million are engaged in types of work acceptable for children who have reached the minimum age for employment (usually 15 years) or in light work such as household chores or work undertaken as part of a child's education.

In terms of geographical distribution, the Asia-Pacific region harbours the largest absolute number of working children between the ages of 5 and 14, with some 127 million or 60% of the world total. Sub-Saharan Africa is second with 48 million, or 23% of the total, followed by Latin America and the Caribbean with 17.4 million or 8%, and Middle East and North Africa with 13.4 million or 6%. The report says about 2.5 million, or 1% of the world's child labourers, are in the industrialised countries, while another 2.4 million are found in transition economies.

Child labour often assumes serious proportions in commercial agriculture associated with global markets for cocoa, coffee, cotton, rubber, sisal, tea and other commodities. Studies in Brazil, Kenya and Mexico have shown that children under 15 make up between 25 and 30% of the total labour force in the production of various commodities. The informal economy, in which workers are not recognised or protected under the legal and regulatory frameworks of the labour market, is where by far the most child labourers are found.

Solutions

In 1999, EI strongly supported the adoption of the ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour and campaigned for its universal ratification. Today, Convention 182 has been ratified by nearly 120 of the ILO's 175 member States.

National and regional programs have flourished under the ILO International Program for the Elimination of Child Labour, launched in 1992. Today it includes operations in 75 countries, a dozen of which have EI and its member organisations as implementing partners. In 2001, the ILO launched its first Time-Bound Programs aimed at eliminating the worst forms of child labour in specific countries within 5 to 10 years. The first programs are aimed at helping some 100,000 children in El Salvador, Nepal and Tanzania.

The report says partnerships between governments, employers' and workers' organisations, with other civil society organisations, mean that real progress is being made in getting children out of work that is damaging them and into school, in supporting them and their families to develop better, more secure livelihoods and in preventing other children from being drawn into child labour.

The ILO report will be discussed at the ILO's 90th International Labour Conference held on June 12. On that day, the ILO is also launching an International Day Against Child Labour. The purpose of this initiative is to reflect on the progress made so far and to pursue fresh efforts to achieve a future without child labour. ◆

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[1] "*A Future Without Child Labour. Global Report under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work*", International Labour Conference, 90th Session, 2002, Report I (B). ISBN 92-2-112416-9. Price: 20 Swiss Francs. The report may also be consulted on the ILO Internet Site www.ilo.org/declaration

Monique Fouilhoux
EI Coordinator

Updating distance education

According to a widely held definition, open and distance education embrace tele-learning, open learning, and the use of telematics in education.

For years now, all states and NGOs have been captivated by the idea of using technology in order to come up with a parallel education system aimed at adults and children living in remote areas, or in situations that prevent them from attending school. It is only since the 1990s that this poor relation of traditional education has begun to be properly used, either separately or in association with face-to-face traditional teaching systems. Bodies like the Commonwealth of Learning (CoL) and the Centre international francophone de formation à distance (CIFFAD – International Francophone Consortium of Distance and Open Learning Institutions) have played important roles in placing education on the agenda of debates, and particularly through the introduction of Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

In the view of UNESCO's John Daniel, there is no doubt that new technology is a formidable tool for each and every one of us, and broadens access to education within the context of lifelong learning.

Education by radio programmes have in the past played a major role in Latin America and Asia, particularly with regard to girls' education, and the Canal éducatif francophone (French-language Education Channel) will hopefully again highlight the role the educational radio can play with its relatively low operating costs, and particularly in the field of sustainable development.

A teacher-training tool. Distance-learning has been used for many years in the training of teachers and headteachers[1]. It is now beginning to be used much more widely, and will break the isolation that is inherent to the work of teachers while enabling them to perfect their abilities.

The most telling argument appears to be that this technique will centralise and industrialise those aspects of teacher training for which it is appropriate and will therefore allow more time and resources to be invested in interaction and reflection[2].

Distance-learning is now seen as one of the measures capable of ensuring that the Education for All objective is achieved by the year 2015. However, a number of questions arise, and as Ann Cheryl Armstrong pertinently reminds us, questions relating to relevance and quality lie at the heart of the discussions. How are we to improve quality and measure it at the same time? As John Daniel of the UK Open University (one of the 'top ten' British universities for quality of teaching) points out, we need to rely on existing good practices.

Other challenges include equity of access to equipment, particularly if we remember, for example, that 95% of computers are in the north. The situation is not the same everywhere. National traditions and capacities vary considerably from country to country, but it would appear that although distance-learning with ICT back-up is not the only solution, it nowadays presents more advantages than dangers. ◆

1 D Nielsen, 1990, *Using distance education to extend and improve teaching in developing countries* (reference document used at the Jomtien Conference preparatory round table).
2 Perraton, 2000, *Open and distance learning in the developing world*.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 10-11
Ann Cheryl Armstrong University of Sheffield

UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL 12-13
John Daniel UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education

THE FRANCOPHONE EDUCATIONAL CHANNEL 14

NATIONAL SITUATIONS 15-16
Chile and Russia

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR OPEN AND DISTANCE EDUCATION 17

COMEBACK OF AN EDUCATION RACKET 18-19
David F. Noble, York University Toronto

CHALLENGES FOR TEACHERS 20-21
Bill Ratteree, ILO Senior Program Officer

DEFINITIONS 22

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OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING

Pitfalls and Possibilities

One of the concerns about distance education held by some students, sceptics, governments, national quality control bodies and some academics from traditional institutions is whether distance education can and will provide "the same level of academic excellence as courses taught in the traditional mode".

Distance education has become a popular vehicle for education. This is due in large part, to the development of new technologies, which have glamorised this form of education, changing it from its humble correspondence beginnings to a modern glitzy field of techno-possibilities. Politically, it has become a popular way of strategically addressing current political problems associated with education such as: access and equity; economic development and workplace training; cost effectiveness of education and training; and accountability of the education system[1].

Though each country has its own raison d'être for engaging in distance education it is perceived by many developing countries as "the ultimate solution" to their academic problems because it provides the advantages of economy, conquest of geographical distances and mass application.

Some learners and governments, however, are especially attracted to programmes where the delivery and content can be customised to suit the specific local employment and education needs. They prefer programmes that are versatile enough to accommodate diverse circumstances and fulfil the requirements of responsiveness and relevance. Internationally recognised quality and certification and the transferability of academic credits at an international level are also strong selling points.

When one considers that an estimated 95% of all computers are in the developed world and the 10 developed nations which account for 20% of the world's population have 75% of the world's telephone lines, one can easily recognize that "most developing countries do not have the infrastructure to take part as equal partners in the worldwide enterprise of knowledge production and dissemination".

Issues

The world-wide expansion of distance education programmes in recent years has been led by both technological advances and the marketisation of education in Europe and America.

As additional markets have been sought by universities looking for new sources of income, technological developments have created opportunities for expanding beyond traditional markets. Electronic mail, video-conferencing, relatively cheap international travel, together with a market of potential learners increasingly requiring certification, which cannot be provided by institutions in their home countries, have made exporting knowledge a lucrative trade.

Communication and Technology

It would be safe to state that regardless of the proposed method of delivery, some form of technology would be used as part of the communication procedures. In developing countries, and more so in the small island states of the Caribbean, the quest for adequate telecommunications facilities is an on-going and arduous one. While it is recognised that a properly functioning telecommunications system is necessary in small island developing states (SIDS), this sector experiences one or more of these problems: "... *under-investment, poor management characterised by monopolistic structures and inadequate human resources development, poor maintenance of equipment and networks, low penetration of services, particularly in the rural areas, high tariffs owing to lack of competition and relatively higher unit costs for provision of services.*"[2]

Equipment maintenance is very often not included into the overall budget or is impractical. For example, though the Caribbean as a region is prone to hurricanes, local distribution cables are hung between upright poles so they become easy victims to gale force winds, falling trees, hurling wind-swept debris from buildings and occasional zaps of lightening. Though the use of underground cable ducts seem to be the practical solution, perhaps it is too costly to implement in the short or even the medium term. Globalisation continues to be a double-edged sword for the weaker countries who may find themselves being continuously marginalized.

In some developing regions of the world, there is not sufficient access to the bandwidth that is necessary for running a networked system. While some learners may have access to the technological hardware such as computers and telephones, others may not. Even for those who have access to the technology, the telephone may be quite unreliable, restricting use of the internet and e-mail which are now considered as basic communication tools in the metropol. Others may experience techno-phobia and panic especially if they had not previously been exposed to the technology until they were mature adults (aged 30 and over).

Using state of the art technology to develop web-based programmes is quite expensive. There is the cost of hardware, software, systems maintenance, upgrades, telecommunication charges, technical support, staff development, programme development, student support systems and other accompanying infra-structural costs. In spite of these challenges, implementing distance education programmes using the technology available can be cost-effective and productive, if courses that are suitable to this sort of medium are capitalised upon. Again, cost benefit analyses with realistic projections should be conducted before commitments are made to any such investments.

Cross-cultural pedagogical issues

There may be different expectations between lecturers

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1 Bartolomé, A.R., and Underwood, J. (1998). 'The FEEODE Project: Technology Enhanced Evaluation in Open and Distance Learning'. In Bartolomé, A.R., and Underwood, J. (eds.), University of Barcelona, Laboratori de Mitjans Interactius.

2 UNITED NATIONS Document E/CN.17/1996/20/Add.6 of 29 February 1996 incorporating corr. 1 of 30 April 1996 Development of Communications in Small Island Developing States. http://www.unep.ch/islands/d96-20a6.htm [Accessed 11 August 2000], para 54.

3 Arunachalam, S. (1998). Information Technology: Equalizer or Separator of Developing Countries? [online] http://horizon.unc.edu/TS/commentary/1998-08.asp [Accessed 29th May 2000]

INTRODUCTION

by Ann Cheryl Armstrong, Director, Caribbean Programs, School of Education, University of Sheffield, UK

and students. For example, some students from some developing countries may expect Western lecturers to be fountains of knowledge while some Western lecturers may expect their students to be more interactive. Conversely, lecturers from other less-interactive cultures may not expect or require student participation. In addition, lecturers from the more developed West may assume a stance of academic superiority by an unwillingness to fully acknowledge instructors from less developed countries as their academic equals. Instructors and students from different cultures may also have differing views on their cultural and economic understandings of the world. Some of the examples used may not be culturally, politically or even economically relevant to the students.

Access to Academic Literature

Another issue of concern is that of access to publications. The majority of 'recognised' publishing takes place in the developed world and quite often the cost of access to either electronic journals or printed journals is prohibitive for students from developing countries. Thus the effect is an ever-increasing gulf between developed and developing countries and a possible increase in the dependency on aspects of foreign aid and 'knowledge imperialism'[3].

There have also been cases where 1st World Universities attract students from smaller 3rd World countries because the 'foreign-ness' of these Universities make them seem high profile and reputable. Sometimes, these students are extremely disappointed when they realise that there are no adequate support structures for the course, which are sometimes packaged in an extremely sterile manner. They feel especially vulnerable if there are no government agencies to guide them on the selection of these training agencies.

Costs to Students

Advocates of distance education have argued that this mode can be less expensive than traditional education systems and that it can also be comparable to these traditional forms in terms of quality. Whether it is actually cheaper depends on a number of factors, including: choice of media; number of subject areas and courses covered; the extent to which the direct variable student cost is kept below the level found in traditional forms of education; and, the number of students enrolled.

One argument that points to increasing costs for developing countries is that of 'technologization of distance education'. As the new technologies develop and are put into use in the 'advanced industrialised countries, this could easily be translated into increased costs for students - especially those in developing countries. If distance learning programmes are designed within a specific and somewhat restrictive set of parameters in order to ensure that they are cost-effective and easily replicable for use in other countries, then, another concern arises; that is, the amount of effort required to adapt the existing programmes, so that they can effectively cater to the existing needs of the country being supported.

If staff from less developed countries are hired, then the cost of labour will be decreased significantly because often, the cost of living there is much lower than in the developed world. This means that institutions wishing to add another cultural dimension to its teaching staff could take advantage of the lower salary requirements of those members of staff in the countries where training is taking place. One can question whether course fees should then be significantly lower than those for students taught in less developed countries.

Though there are several real issues that need to be addressed by SIDS, there are several wonderful opportunities that can be created by the skilful use of distance education as a vehicle to promote a more knowledgeable work force.

Wonderful opportunities

Based on the issues identified above, there seem to be two main models of distance education operating at the moment – one being a more technology driven transmission model and the other a more interactive model. The former uses the technology in a manner that fails to engage with the historical heritage of the learners and fails to acknowledge the socio-cultural differences between the provider and the learners. The latter uses technology in varying degrees to support teaching and learning but also relies on the use of spaces (real or virtual) to foster the growth of relationships and develop avenues for collaboration among educators, Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Ministries of Education. Possibilities therefore exist for the sharing of professional concerns and expertise while working with people across national and cultural boundaries.

Though it is acknowledged that the globalisation of educational provision through distance learning systems of delivery carries its own inherent dangers as a colonising and controlling process, it can be argued that developments in distance education pedagogies do offer genuine opportunities for engaging in collaborative, yet critical initiatives and interventions. This critical pedagogy is one that must be based upon a theoretical and practical engagement with the politics of post-colonialism based upon the mutual analysis of the lived experience of educators and students in the different locations. ◆

In the Caribbean, the telecommunications and postal systems can be somewhat unreliable as service providers struggle to keep up with technological advances in communication and so timely and frequent student-to-faculty interactions is one of the most difficult of problems to overcome. The lack of ready access to adequate library resources beyond the set readings and required texts is also a cause for much concern.

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Open and Distance Learning: Unlocking the Potential

by John Daniel
Assistant Director-General for Education
UNESCO

Why use technology?

Before we assume that open and distance learning, i.e. technology, provides answers for education we should know what the questions are. Education today faces three major challenges. The first is access, the second is quality and the third is cost. The tensions between these vectors make up the eternal triangle of education.

The major problem in education today is that hundreds of millions of the world's citizens do not receive it. The question is, can technology increase access?

The second challenge is quality. The standard definition of quality is simply 'fitness for purpose at minimum cost to society'. So what is the purpose? Education should have two aims, to create human capital and to create social capital. Human capital means the individual knowledge and skills that make a person more autonomous, more flexible and more productive. But no person is an island. We also need social capital, which is trust in other people, networks of contacts, the coming together of people for a common goal that creates communities.

The third side of my triangle is cost. High cost limits access and is bad for quality.

When you express the basic challenges of education in terms of this triangle it is clear that traditional methods of teaching and learning cannot meet them. Put more students in each class. Access may go up, cost may go down, but everyone will accuse you of lowering quality.

The challenges are clear. The question is, can technology do anything about them? Can technology really increase access, improve quality and lower costs all at the same time. The evidence shows that it can. How does it do it?

The challenges are clear. The question is, can technology do anything about them? Can technology really increase access, improve quality and lower costs all at the same time. The evidence shows that it can.

How to use technology?

Technology is the application of scientific and other organized knowledge to practical tasks by organizations consisting of people and machines. Two implications follow. First, this is not a futile search for the perfect method of learning. Second, we live in a world of people and machines. Good use of technology always involves people and their social systems.

Learning involves two types of activities. First, there are activities that the learner conducts independently, such as reading a book, viewing a TV program, listening to the teacher or to an audio-cassette, writing an essay and doing mathematical calculations. These are the activities that allow you to use technology to increase access, improve quality and cut costs. That is because the basic tools of independent learning, such as print and audio materials and TV programs cost relatively little to reproduce in volume once you've invested in the first copy. Volume helps to increase access and cut costs. It also allows you to improve quality, because once you are producing materials at scale you can afford to make them excellent.

Second, you need interactive activities. Most learners will not succeed on independent activities alone. I use 'interactive' for a situation where the student's activity evokes a response by another human being – a teacher, a tutor, or another student – that is specifically tailored to that particular student. Interactive activities are events such as face-to-face sessions with other students or a tutor, having homework marked and commented on by a teacher, asking questions over the phone, getting a response to a query by e-mail, and so on. These activities are vital to the success of most students but do not lend themselves to economies of scale in the same way as independent activities.

The key to using technology cost-effectively is to blend independent and interactive activities to produce efficient learning at low cost.

The world's open universities are a striking example of this. They operate at scale and they take full advantage of their large scale to produce high quality materials at relatively low cost. For the interactive activities they hire large numbers of tutors to be in direct contact with the students. These tutors are expert in the subject of their course and are specially trained for tutoring in a technology-based learning system. They give students high-quality support.

Who can benefit from technology in education?

Who is technology-based learning for? My answer is that it is for everyone. The concept of blending independent and interactive activities leads naturally to the idea of blending technology and teachers in different ways for different purposes.

In terms of the criteria for access, quality and cost that I outlined, the technology of open and distance learning has achieved its greatest successes, so far, in higher education. This is because university study naturally includes a larger proportion of independent learning than you would find in kindergarten.

The story of the world's open universities is the greatest

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educational success story of our generation. The open universities have successfully reconfigured my eternal triangle. Internationally the twelve largest open universities enrol over three million students, a massive increase in access. In one country, the UK, the Open University today enrols more students than the total enrolment of all British universities in 1963 when its creation was announced. The UK also commissioned some independent assessments of costs, and found that the total cost of a degree at the Open University was between 60 to 80% of costs in traditional institutions.

The biggest surprise to the sceptics has been in the area of quality. Today the UK Open University ranks in the top ten per cent of UK universities for the quality of its teaching programs as evaluated by the national agency for quality assessment. The straitjacket of the eternal triangle has been broken open.

I shall not review the use of technology at all levels of education in turn. Most people believe that kids should learn in a social context. In principle it should be easier to develop the social capital that I referred to earlier if the school itself is a good social system that inculcates trust and co-operation. That means a high proportion of interactive activities.

However, it is clear that the patience of a computer, and the one-to-one relationship that a child can have with it, can help children learn without the fear of failure. It can help to build human capital. Through properly designed exercises computers can help children learn the skills of co-operation and teamwork. They can help to build social capital. The web can allow students to discover other countries and other places in a colourful, hands-on way. It can help us to learn to live together. The web has been a nice asset for many of the 7,000 schools in 170 countries in UNESCO's Associated Schools Program – although we try to ensure that the schools on the wrong side of the digital divide are not disadvantaged.

Where can we use technology in education?

Where should we use technology? Once upon a time the main use of technology in education was for distance learning. But this did not mean it was a rural phenomenon. Geographical distance is not the only distance. People can be separated from learning by time, because they cannot fit in with the schedules of classroom teaching. People can be separated socially from learning because they do not feel comfortable in a particular educational institution. People can be separated from learning by disability because they cannot get to the institution, or they cannot hear the teacher or they cannot see the blackboard.

Today technology is for everyone, everywhere. Effective

education combines people and technology. We must also have a broad view of technology. Reflect on this quotation from Edith Mhehe from her research on female students at the Open University of Tanzania: *"When I asked about the possible use of alternative learning technologies one woman suggested that her most pressing need was not for learning technologies but for other technologies such as washing machines, cookers and vacuum cleaners, which would help shorten the time she spent on housework and increase the time she needed for studying."*

Which technologies?

What principles guide our choice of technology? First, start from the position of the learner and create a stimulating environment for study. Second, the availability of a particular technology is a pre-eminent consideration. It is futile to propose using the Internet in a country where only a tiny proportion of the population has access to either electricity or a telephone.

Availability is linked to the third principle, cost. Try to use technology that the learner already has, even if that means simple technology. Cost leads to quality. The best technologies are those that are easy to use. For example, one of the reasons that audiocassettes are a popular technology with both students and teachers is that they are easy to produce and easy to use.

Finally, bear in mind my distinction between independent learning activities and interactive learning activities. Using these principles will help you develop an effective blend of technology and people and allow you to join the modern revolution in education. You will find that you can increase access, improve quality and reduce costs all at the same time. ◆

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TECHNOLOGY

The Francophone Educational Channel: A major Agence de la Francophonie program

CANAL Educatif Francophone (Canal EF), the digital radio education channel by satellite for the African continent, was launched in 1999, and came on stream in 2000. The main aim was to provide an education and training system by radio for French-speaking people in Africa, the Indian Ocean and the Middle East. It was set up for an experimental period of four years from 2000 to 2003, and is initially aimed at education and training institutions (e.g. schools, colleges, high schools, universities, and training establishments) and at rural and urban communities. There is also an opening to members of the general public – particularly young people – who are eager to undergo training and enjoy intellectual and cultural enrichment.

The programs are broadcast by WorldSpace's AfriStar digital radio satellite. The system includes a bank of audiodigital programs that will eventually be accessible without an aerial by satellite or on the Internet. The bank, which is hosted on a server at the Agence, is central to the exercise. All the programs in the education channel are digitised, archived, managed and distributed.

Programs are received directly by digital radio receivers with a small built-in antenna. The receivers can also be connected to a computer to transmit and process accompanying data. An initial batch of 500 sets will be made available to receiving authorities during the experimental phase. They are in the DIDAC network, and are mostly secondary education establishments and teacher training institutes. Through partnerships, however, the CANAL EF programs may also be broadcast on the FM band via local and national antennas so as to reach out to more listeners.

Programming, targets and partners

CANAL EF is educational radio, not school radio. You can learn a lot from it, but there isn't much teaching – at least, not directly. Just the same, programs are partly linked to education and training programs, particularly those to do with practising French. There are also awareness-raising and development programs on health and safety, the environment and environmental protection, and issues of water, rights and citizenship, in addition to broadcasts on cultural and leisure matters such as African in the world, heritage and history, literature, culture, music, and a key issue: youth.

The daily schedule is in three parts, each lasting two hours, and repeated in order to cover the four time periods:

1. morning broadcasts consisting of short programs lasting 3-6 minutes (e.g. general science, practical tips and short talks);
2. midday broadcasts called 'École Nouvelle' (New School) lasting 15-20 minutes, and focusing on education establishments in the 'DIDAC network';
3. evening broadcasts lasting longer (up to an hour) and dealing more specifically with literary and cultural subjects and illustrations of African heritage.

The countries targeted by this programs are firstly the 30 Francophone countries in the zone served by the AfriStar satellite as broadcasts can be picked up by all countries in Africa. For the most part, targeted listeners are pupils at school, young people and students, teachers and trainers.

CANAL EF functions thanks to a wide range of partners, and operates as a north/north and south/south cooperation project. When the experimental phase is over, the head of the network will move to one of the countries in the south concerned. ◆

To find out more about Canal EF, please go to:
< http://www.canalef.org >

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Distance teacher-training courses are a "good business"

Although today distance learning is something of a controversial issue, in practice it already enjoys a long and well-established tradition, especially in vocational training and adult education – for example, in the form of correspondence courses, programd learning texts, and educational radio and TV programs. Currently the use of the Internet is becoming increasingly widespread as an effective tool for distance learning.

Both in Chile and globally, the new opportunities offered by Information and Communication Technology (internationally known as e-learning) are being put to good use in a very wide range of educational areas, from the training of executive and technical staff to vocational training, further education and academic courses.

However, distance learning programs are increasingly being offered by institutions which, implementing market-oriented strategies, resort to distance learning because it is cheaper, capable of catering for a larger number of students and, hence, more profitable. Often no real concern is shown for academic standards or the quality of education provided by this means.

Distance in-service training for teachers has long been present in the Chilean education system, but the availability of such courses has significantly increased in recent years in the context of a major development of the further education market in our country. Many institutions started offering a range of courses varying widely in both quality and length but usually enabling students to gain a larger number of credits in a relatively shorter period of time than courses requiring full-time or part-time classroom attendance.

Distance teacher-training courses have been welcomed by many teachers, although there is a general feeling that the acceptance of this kind of training has more to do with the opportunity for salary increases than with a real commitment to improving the quality of courses and teaching skills. All this has brought a certain amount of discredit on distance learning and, in an attempt to respond to such criticism, some institutions have already begun to develop better quality alternatives, including mixed courses which combine the use of ICT and traditional tutorials or seminars.

Within the framework of educational reform, the Ministry of Education is promoting ICT-based further training courses to familiarise the greatest possible number of teachers with the new curricula. However, ensuring that these new forms of teaching are actually used to create a better and more equitable training system is likely to remain a major challenge: distance learning programs should provide quality training for a larger number of teachers, rather than just provide a new and easier way of obtaining qualifications that do not reflect a real learning process and real skills.

As regards the use of distance learning for initial (or undergraduate) training, although no regular programs exist in Chile at this level, a number of special "qualifying" programs have appeared, supposedly for people with teaching experience, the aim being to enable them to continue working while studying in their free time. The Teachers Association ("Colegio de Profesores") has expressed concern about these courses since they often attract people who are not actually engaged in teaching but nevertheless eventually gain a teaching qualification through courses whose quality is not subject to any official control. Unfortunately, universities – many of which are facing a serious shortage of funding – continue to promote and market such distance teacher-training courses, which are regarded as "good business" since they provide academic institutions with a significant source of revenue at minimal cost.

Finally, in our country, as in many foreign universities, distance learning is beginning to be used in postgraduate education. The qualifications obtained in this way are also being seriously called into question, given that they are subject to the same kinds of problem associated with market competition, and no regulations exist to ensure adequate quality standards.

Apart from the problem posed by a competitive market not subject to any kind of quality-assurance legislation, a key issue which ought to be studied and researched is that of the extent to which distance learning can replace the traditional, direct interaction between teachers and students in the classroom, particularly in the case of teacher-training, given that this interaction is the hub of the teaching/learning process and is therefore essential to the proper training of teachers. ◆

Jorge Pavez Urrutia
National President
Colegio de Profesores de Chile

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RUSSIA

Russia launches major program in distance education

For more than 10 years now, programs have been conducted within the educational system of Russia to integrate telecommunication and computer networks. The aim is quite clear – to create open/distance educational opportunities for the majority of the population, but this can only be achieved through changes in national governmental policy.

Since 1997, the Ministry of Education of Russia has conducting experimental programs in some universities. The result is the creation of two types of new technologies: Internet library and multisubject educational satellite TV network.

The programs helped work out the role for teachers and a new methodology for educating with the new technology. The experiment covered educational centres in most Russian regions, testing technological principles of distance education, thus facilitating new approaches to higher education, including in areas far away from the university campus.

At present, the Association of Open Universities comprises 22 universities in different parts of the country. 15,000 students take courses through distance education. The Association offers 300 courses to students all over the country.

The Ministry of Education is developing a major program in distance education. In the last two years, the subject was discussed at conferences dedicated to legal aspects of open education, open education in vocational education, functioning of corporate information systems in open education.

The expected result of the program is to provide access to quality information resources to students and teachers in 50% of public schools and in 70% of vocational educational establishments and ultimately, to involve the education community in distance education.

The arising problems are often of a legal aspect (there is still no legal definition of distance education), demands for equipment, teachers and technical personnel, and the combination of distance education with existing traditional forms of education. Currently there is no fixed procedure or standards for granting licenses to educational centres for providing distance education. Students should also have certain rights and obligations.

One third of all school children come from rural areas; these schools are extremely difficult to connect to a single network. Only 25% of teachers and school heads have basic knowledge of information technologies. New approaches are needed to create electronic textbooks and materials.

The existing experience creates conditions for Russian universities to join the international education and information market, but they should mostly orient their activities in this field domestically and in the countries of former Soviet republics. Unfortunately, there does not exist a common approach in forming didactic subject material. More often such resources are created on the basis of different programs and do not take into account demands of consumers or peculiarities of the educational process. Educational centres should enjoy equal rights in conducting distance education. ◆

Nikolay Kolobashkin
International Secretary
Profsoyuz Obrazovaniya (ESEUR)

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ICDE, the International Council for Open and Distance Education

by Reidar Roll,
Secretary General

CURRENT AND FIELDS OF ACTION FOR ICDE

- Help narrow the digital divide in education and training
- Understand better, through research and development, how the Internet can be used for provision of high quality learning
- Focus on quality and high standards of best practise
- Work with governments, IGOs and the education sector to develop educational systems for the information society
- Work with teachers and other professionals around the world to develop capacity and quality in technology-enhanced learning
- Work with companies that develop technology and software for education in order to help make their products better and more relevant for education
- Promote multiculturalism in the provision of virtual learning

Founded in 1938 to help provide education for students and children living far away from schools – especially in large under-populated countries like Canada and Australia –, the International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE) is now present in 142 countries. The majority of its membership is composed of educational institutions at all levels (schools, colleges, universities), but it also includes national and regional associations, corporations, educational authorities and agencies, active in open, virtual and distance learning.

The main mission of the ICDE is to provide leadership and facilitate cooperation, development and communication at the global level in distance and virtual learning. More precisely, its mission is:

- To promote open and distance education, along with associated goals such as flexible learning, community education and adult education throughout the world;
- To help develop networks and systems for educational purposes at national, regional and global levels, with special reference to lifelong learning;
- To facilitate the emergence of new educational paradigms based on the best practices in distance education, and to contribute to the development of new methodologies and technologies applied to education and training;
- To foster international collaboration and the sharing of experience in education and training across national borders, especially among teachers and students using new technologies;
- To create an appropriate environment for the planning of new educational initiatives, in cooperation with cultural industries and services.

Such general and permanent missions are directed at the major issues the world of education is confronted with at the beginning of the 21st century, such as the global need for basic education addressed by the long-term UNESCO program "Education for All", in which ICDE is directly involved; the applications of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to education; and the development of a world education market and the necessary regulation to achieve in terms of access and of quality assurance.

Founded just before the Second World War, ICDE provided the only forum in the world where distance education institutions and professionals could meet in order to discuss important issues, learn from each other and enter into partnerships and business ventures with each other. In the first decades of ICDE's existence, the participation of American universities was very strong, together with universities from Canada and Australia. The European participation came in later. With the founding of the British Open University thirty years ago, distance education took a new development. During the period 1970-1995, ICDE went through a very rapid development, with the establishment of a large number of distance education institutions around the world.

Among the most prominent ICDE open university members are IGNOU in India, UNISA in South Africa, ANADOLOU in Turkey, CNED in France, UNED in Spain, the UKOU in the United Kingdom, the Fern Universität in Germany. ICDE also includes new "virtual" universities delivering their courses on the Internet, as well as hundreds of "dual mode" institutions, which combine the traditional face-to-face offer with a distance education department for students outside their campuses.

Open and distance education has undergone tremendous evolution through bouts of doubt, ridicule, and rejection at various stages of its history to its current mainstream acceptance as a viable alternative and cost-effective mode of education complementary to the face-to-face mode. The emergence and catalytic development of new information and communication technologies, telecommunications and computer technology has globalised ODL (Open and Distance Learning), and made it attractive, commercial and competitive.

ODL is essentially about the best way to design and develop instructional packages, to communicate instruction, to interact with learners and provide support, to assess learning and to disseminate information in a knowledge-based society. The key to all these is definitely research. While the first and second generations of ODL did little to entrench and foster the development of research in any organised fashion, research and engagement might be one of the most important characteristics which will distinguish quality ODL institutions and products from those emerging so-called online or virtual institutions which have no roots in pedagogy and inquiry. ◆

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The correspondence course goes online : Comeback o

With the arrival of the internet, distance learning has become hugely popular. Universities see it as the marketplace of the 21st century and are investing a great deal of energy in online services, especially in the United States. But do those who are promoting this transformation in higher education know the less than glorious record of their precursors?

by David F. Noble*, Historian and Professor at York University, Toronto

Correspondence instruction began as a commercial enterprise before taking hold in academia. Thomas J. Foster established one of the earliest private, for-profit correspondence schools in Pennsylvania in the late 1880s to provide vocational training in mining, mine safety, drafting and metalworking. He then founded the International Correspondence Schools, which became one of the largest and most enduring firms in this burgeoning industry. In 1924 these commercial enterprises boasted an enrolment four times that of all the colleges, universities, and professional schools combined. By 1926 there were over 300 correspondence schools in the US, with an annual income of over $70m.

In all the firms the priority was enrolment and most of the revenues were expended in promotion rather than instruction. Typically between 50% and 80% of tuition fees went into direct mail campaigns, magazine and newspaper advertisements, and the training and support of a sales staff paid according to the number of enrolments they secured. "*The most intensive work of all the schools is, in fact, devoted to developing the sales force*," observed a 1926 Carnegie Corporation-sponsored study of correspondence schools written when the correspondence movement was at its peak[1].

The pursuit of profit tended inescapably to subvert the noble intentions - or pretensions - of the enterprise, in what had become a highly competitive (and totally unregulated) field. The students enrolled were required to pay the full tuition fee, or a substantial part of it, up-front and most of the firms had a no-refund policy. Yet roughly 90% of the students failed to complete their course of study[2].

The economics of this cynical education system meant there was no incentive to try to keep students on by improving the quality of course offerings. In fact the reverse was true: recruitment rather than instruction remained the goal.

Drop-out money

The remarkably high drop-out rate was not an accident. It reflected not only the shameless methods of recruitment but also the shoddy quality of what was on offer. For the actual "delivery" of courses - the correction of lessons and grading exams - most firms relied upon a "sub-professional" workforce of "readers" who worked part-time and were paid on a piecework basis per lesson or exam.

These people often worked under sweatshop conditions. They had to deliver a high volume of lessons to make a living and could therefore not manage much by way of pedagogical performance. Such conditions were far from conducive to the careful, individualised instruction promised in the companies' promotional materials[3].

All of this made perfect economic sense, however. It was summed up in correspondence industry jargon in the phrase "drop-out money": once students dropped out there was no further expense (in particular for teachers) and what remained of the upfront payment was pure profit.

The economics of this cynical education system meant there was no incentive to try to keep students on by improving the quality of course offerings. In fact the reverse was true: recruitment rather than instruction remained the goal.

The evolution of correspondence instruction in the universities closely paralleled that of the commercial schools. It began in earnest in the 1890s, and by the 1910s and 1920s it had become a craze comparable with today's passion for online distance education. Following the lead of the University of Chicago, other institutions joined in, notably the state universities of Wisconsin, Nebraska, Minnesota, Kansas, Oregon, Texas, Missouri, Colorado, Pennsylvania, Indiana, and California. By 1919, when Columbia University launched its home study program, there were already 73 colleges and universities offering instruction by correspondence.

Emphasising the democratisation of education and hoping to tap into the lucrative market exploited by their commercial rivals, the universities echoed the sales pitch of the private schools. Hervey F. Mallory, head of the University of Chicago Home Study Department, declared that "*In the crowded classroom of the ordinary American university it is impossible to treat students as individuals, overcome peer pressure for conformity, encourage students who are shy, slow, intimidated by a class setting*". Home study, by contrast, "takes into account individual differences in learning".

In short, correspondence education was seen as more than just an extension of traditional education. It was an enhancement - a means of instruction less costly and of higher quality - that signalled a revolution in higher education.

Although they were not per se for-profit organisations, the correspondence programs of the universities were self-supporting, and therefore profit played its part. It was initially assumed that this new form of instruction would be of greater economic value than traditional classroom-based teaching, but its pio-

* David F. Noble is the author of The Religion of Technology, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1997. This article is part of the "Digital Diploma Mills" series available online at http://communication.ucsd.edu/dl

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an education racket

neers soon discovered that correspondence instruction was far more costly to operate than they had imagined - primarily because of the overheads entailed in administration. Almost from the outset, therefore, they found themselves caught up in much the same game as their commercial rivals: devising promotional schemes to boost enrolment in order to offset growing administrative costs; reducing their course preparation and revision expenses by standardising their repertory and relying on "canned courses"; and above all keeping remuneration to a minimum by using casual employment and paying by piece rate.

Before long, with a degraded product and a dropout rate almost comparable to that of the commercial firms, they, too, had come to depend for their survival on "drop-out money." At the end of the 1920s the university-based programs began to come under the kind of scrutiny and scathing criticism hitherto reserved for the commercial schools. Abraham Flexner, one of the nation's most distinguished and influential observers of higher education, excoriated the American universities for their commercial preoccupations, for having compromised their independence and integrity, and for having thus abandoned their unique and essential social function of disinterested critical and creative inquiry. "*The universities have thoughtlessly and excessively catered to fleeting, transient, and immediate demands*," Flexner argued, and have "*needlessly cheapened, vulgarised, and mechanised themselves, reducing themselves to the level of the vendors of patent medicines*" [4].

Likewise, he bemoaned as "*scandalous*" the fact that "*the prestige of the University of Chicago should be used to bamboozle well-meaning but untrained persons ... by means of extravagant and misleading advertisements*". He assailed the "*administrative usurpation of professorial functions*" and declared that "*the American professoriate is a proletariat*".

Flexner's critique of correspondence education, which gained widespread media attention, sent shockwaves through academia, prompting internal efforts to raise standards and curtail excessive and misleading advertising. At Columbia, the blow was eventually fatal to the correspondence program.

Rebirth of a 'revolution'

Subsequent investigations[5] and efforts at reform and regulation invariably failed to change the picture, even though correspondence programs adopted the latest media of delivery, including film, telephone, radio, audio-tapes, and television. Universities continued to offer correspondence instruction, of course, but the efforts were much more modest in their claims and ambitions. Poor cousins of classroom instruction, they were for the most part confined to institutionally separate and self-supporting extensions and carefully cordoned off from the campus proper, presumably to spare the core institution the expense, the commercial contamination and the criticism.

Like their forebears, today's proponents of distance education believe they are leading a revolution that will transform the educational landscape. Fixated on technology and the future, they are unencumbered by the sober lessons of this cautionary tale. If anything, the commercial element in distance education is this time even stronger. For now, instead of trying to distance themselves from their commercial rivals, the universities are eagerly joining forces with them, lending their brand names to profit-making enterprise in exchange for a piece of the action.

Four institutions prominent in the correspondence movement are at it again. The University of Wisconsin has a deal with Lotus/IBM and other private contractors, the University of California has contracts with America Online and Onlinelearning.net and the University of Chicago and Columbia are among the most enterprising participants in the new distance education gold rush. The new game is less about generating revenues from student fees than about reaping a harvest from financial speculation in the education industry through stock options and initial public offerings[6].

For the time being, however, until the actors arrive, the bulk of university-based online distance education courses are being delivered by poorly paid and overworked low status instructors, working on a per-course basis without benefits or job security and being coerced to assign their rights to their course materials to their employer as a condition of employment. In short, the imperatives of commodity production are again in full force, shaping the working conditions of instructors until they are replaced once and for all by machines, scriptwriters and actors.

There are differences between the current rage for online distance education and the earlier debacle of correspondence distance education. First, although they began to take hold in extension divisions, commercial online initiatives have already begun to penetrate deep into the heart of the university. Second, if the overheads for correspondence courses were high, the infrastructural expenses of online courses are higher still. Most notably, while correspondence programs were often aimed at a broad market, most of their efforts remained regional. The ambitious reach of today's distance educators, however, is global in scale, which is why the World Trade Organisation is currently at work trying to remove all barriers to international trade in educational commodities. Sometimes tragedy follows farce. ◆

1. John Noffsinger, Correspondence Schools, MacMillan Company, New York, 1926.
2. Noffsinger's survey of 75 correspondence schools, op. cit., shows that only 2.6% of the enrolled students completed the courses they had begun.
3. John Noffsinger, op. cit.
4. Abraham Flexner, Universities: American, English, German, Oxford University Press, New York, 1930.
5. Notably the Carnegie Corporation-funded study by the Research Project on Correspondence Education, 1968.
6. The Wall Street Journal, New York, 2 April, 1999.

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ICT use in open and distance teaching and learning

In April 2000, just two weeks before the Dakar conference on Education for All, the International Labour Office convened a meeting on lifelong learning in the 21st century which featured an international debate on the changing roles and responsibilities of teachers as nations move slowly towards the construction of lifelong learning policies and systems. Participants, including many EI representatives, were conscious of the need to address the place of distance and open learning methods based on new information and communications technologies (ICT) in meeting learners' needs. They concluded that greater application of ICT in an appropriate manner to make learning accessible to everyone, and to reduce learning disparities of the digital divide within and between nations depends in no small part on the initial preparation, continual training and professional development components of educators' own lifelong learning to develop and maintain a high level of competency in ICT skills[1].

The debate around teachers' use of ICT generally, and in open and distance learning particularly, is not new, but it has grown in volume and intensity as school and university systems invest in ICT hardware and software, expecting this investment to yield qualitative and quantitative changes in educational outputs. Despite starry-eyed predictions for some time that electronically-based education - "e-learning"- will become a dominant, even universal form of instruction, the world is a long way from this state. Nevertheless, demand and utilization are rising and not likely to stop. European surveys estimate that more than half of primary schools in most countries employ one or more ICT tools - primarily, but not exclusively networked computers - in teaching. While use in secondary schools of most member countries of the OECD is already universal or approaching it[2]. Usage of some form of ICT for distance and open learning - compressed video, satellite-generated transmissions, videotape, microwave, computer-based technology, etc - is rapidly growing throughout the industrialized world, particularly in post-secondary education, be it vocational, technical or university, and in the interfaces between formal education and workplace-based learning. Despite the well-known obstacles posed by lack of investment funds for hardware and software, much less for teacher training and other professional considerations, demand and utilization continues to rise in the developing world, particularly as distance learning options are employed to break down access barriers.

A major disequilibrium exists between the considerable investments to date in hardware and software, and the lesser investment in teachers' training to use both. A Eurydice survey has estimated that as little as 20% of overall ICT resources go to human resources in many countries.

What are the roles and responsibilities of teachers in this brave new world?

There is a current of thinking that tends to blame teachers in the industrialized countries, where most schools and classrooms already have the necessary hardware, software and communications connections, for the slow pace in achieving universal access and use, not to mention results. Teachers, especially older teachers, are judged to be reluctant to use new learning tools, intimidated by their student's superior knowledge of computers and the Internet, resistant to ICT introduction as a challenge to their skills and competencies, or are not interested in retraining. In short, they are seen as unable to deliver effective ICT-based learning. The problems are even more acute in most developing countries where teachers and schools confront a digital divide of non-universal access to computers, programs and the Internet even before they tackle questions of effective use.

This critical picture is changing perceptibly but remains a challenge for education and especially teachers. As training and practice widen, an increasing percentage of teachers are more comfortable with the use of technological tools as essential pedagogical supports, but there remain large numbers of teachers who are neither sufficiently trained nor interested in ICT use, while many who are trained fail to substantially alter pedagogical practice towards more learner-centred education using ICT as a base. Though the knowledge base is growing, little is still known about the efficacy of new technologies for enhancing the quality and efficiency of learning. Moreover, some critics of the wholesale introduction of ICT in schools argue that it may at best be a distraction, and at worst harmful for learning. The debate, however, turns more on the question of ways ICT can be harnessed in the interests of child-centred learning and at the same time respects the professionalism of teachers. Accordingly, teachers' organizations have a strong interest in the options for change in a positive direction which enhances teachers' skills and

1 ILO, Conclusions on lifelong learning in the twenty-first century: the changing roles of educational personnel, Joint Meeting, Geneva, 2000.
2 Eurydice, ICT@Europe.edu, Brussels, 2001; OECD, Learning to Change: ICT in Schools, Paris, 2001.
3 Duke, Chris, Teachers and new ICT in teaching and learning, ILO (forthcoming).

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Challenges for teachers

The ILO recently commissioned research in a few industrialized countries to look at three aspects: the continuing professional development of teachers which facilitates and encourages appropriate and effective ICT use; the work organization in classrooms, schools and higher education sites and the workload implications of greater ICT use; and the process by which decisions on ICT are made.

competencies, preserves their professional identity and makes for more effective teaching and learning.

Reviewing obstacles in 2000 the ILO noted, as have organizations such as the OECD and European institutions, that a major disequilibrium exists between the considerable investments to date in hardware and software, and the lesser investment in teachers' training to use both. A Eurydice survey has estimated that as little as 20% of overall ICT resources go to human resources in many countries. This remains an issue, but is by no means the only one.

Interested in the wider dimensions of the problem, the ILO recently commissioned research in a few industrialized countries to look at three aspects: the continuing professional development (CPD) of teachers which facilitates and encourages appropriate and effective ICT use; the work organization in classrooms, schools and higher education sites and the workload implications of greater ICT use; and the process by which decisions on ICT are made. This third aspect, in some ways the most important because it affects ownership, empowerment, and professional autonomy, examines to what extent social dialogue in the form of genuine consultation or negotiation on planning, introduction and evaluation of ICT application actually functions between teachers and their unions and educational authorities, public or private.

The results of this research[1] are still very preliminary but suggest some interesting avenues for further investigation and action by teachers' organizations. In the realm of teacher education, even if pre-service ICT training is widely available but not universal, the important battleground is in the area of CPD, which still remains underfunded and far from being accessible to all educators. Teacher unions increasingly advocate this as a right, no doubt anticipating a future in which ICT professional development - indeed CPD generally - will most likely be an obligation. As the industrialized world at least moves in that direction, considerable experimentation is going on concerning what modes of CPD work best for the effective adoption of new ICT. While formal training is important it needs to be oriented more towards questions of integration in pedagogical practice. Many country examples suggest that holistic, school-based networking, with or without an ICT coordinator, and peer support are key.

In comparison to other sectors or industries, the spread of ICT has not led to significant anxiety about losses of jobs in teaching, with the possible exception of tertiary education affected more by ICT-driven "virtual" and transnational education[4], but ICT development has created concerns on many other fronts relating to teaching and learning conditions. Among these are work organization and reorganization of working time that enables effective integration of ICT in teaching practice. The failure to adjust workloads to allow planning for integration has previously been cited as an obstacle to greater use, and the more recent survey on behalf of the ILO reveals that the complexity of integrating ICT in different learning situations calls for additional help to make this a reality. The issue of professional insecurity arising from lack of training and development leads to stress and concern over job satisfaction and the quality of working life. These are issues increasingly cited as reasons for dissatisfaction and departures from the teaching profession, in turn contributing to widespread teacher shortages. However, it is clear that despite concerns over the slower than expected proliferation of ICT use, there is little sustained investigation of the impact of new ICT on teachers' jobs, conditions of employment and the quality of working life.

Perhaps the most fundamental challenge remains in the area of decision-making. Effective means of consultation and negotiation - social dialogue - on what kinds of ICTs, how to effectively integrate them in daily learning situations, the necessary professional development, and the organization of work to satisfy teachers and learners is still woefully inadequate almost everywhere. Within schools, informal, horizontal peer networks to support staff are widely used to compensate for the lack of consultation and deficiencies in training. When consulted, teachers, including many school heads, consider that central management decisions are driven more by cost and economy concerns than by quality. Collective bargaining on the issue is practically non-existent. ◆

Assuming this snapshot is broadly representative of educational systems, the challenges for teachers' organizations are multiple, and the agenda for consultation and negotiation very broad, notably with regard to:

- Compulsory initial ICT training where it does not yet exist and the extension of continual professional development to all teachers an effective right and obligation, not just an option;
- Internal union policies which both insist on and support members' active involvement in CPD for effective use of ICT;
- New career structures which link ICT-based competencies, responsibilities and rewards, including more diversification in specialized tasks such as ICT mentors, curriculum and information specialists;
- The workplace dimensions: flexible time-tabling and school organization, adjustments in workloads for planning and peer support, appropriate class sizes and/or support staff.

Above all, internal union plans or strategies for ICT use are key starting points for more systematic social dialogue with educational authorities at the most appropriate levels – school, local or national – on ICT introduction and integration which takes account of the current obstacles, costs and investment possibilities and quality concerns, those of learners and teachers.

Bill Ratteree
Senior Program Officer
Education sector specialist,
International Labour Office

4 The recent EI conference on higher education in Montreal has noted growing threats to the nature of work, intellectual property rights and academic freedom among effects of ICT-driven educational services.

DEFINING TERMS

The following definitions come from various sources and have got some degree of acceptability from use[1].

Educational technology is the systematic planning of teaching and learning within a process that compares the appropriateness of alternative methodologies as means of achieving defined learning outcomes.

Distance education is an educational process in which a significant proportion of the teaching is conducted by someone removed in space and/or time from the learner.

Open learning is an organized educational activity, based on the use of teaching materials, in which constraints on study are minimized in terms either of access, or of time and place, pace, method of study, or any combination of these.

Computer-based learning is the use of computers in education either to provide programs that deliver instruction, or to facilitate communication between learner and tutor, or to enable students to have access to remote sources of information.

Telematics is the combined use of telecommunication and computer technology.

New information technologies, and information and communication technologies, are synonyms for telematics.

Open and distance learning is an umbrella term covering distance education, open learning, and the use of telematics in education. ◆

1 UNESCO Thematic Studies, Applying New Technologies and Cost-Effective Delivery Systems in Basic Education, 2001, p. 3, ED 2001/WS/20

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A DAY...

© J. Delorme

at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria

The decades of dictatorship, corruption, the exodus of intellectuals, and then structural adjustment programs have tarnished the reputations of the best-known universities in Nigeria. For the teachers who remain, radical reform is required.

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'Isn't Professor Amusu there?' The same question pops up every time a student comes into the tiny room that is used as the secretariat for the Modern Languages Department at Lagos State University. Nobody takes offence. The students know all about the juggling that the teachers have to do to make both ends meet. Professor Amusu works as an interpreter when he gets the chance, others give private lessons, or work as journalists, run small companies, drive taxis or work in the fields. This time, it's something different – a congress in Abuja – and he should be back today, unless he can't make it until tomorrow. The phones don't work, so the students will have to wait and return later.

Waiting. That's something that nobody can avoid doing if they want to study at a university in Nigeria. Like Pauline, for example, a 23-year-old whose five years of education have been interrupted by several months of strikes. *'This is the most expensive university in the world,' she says with a hint of sarcasm, and then produces figures: 'the fees are 150 nairas a month[1], but there is no infrastructure and no accommodation. I spend 3-4 hours a day in traffic-jams between the campus and Surulere, the district of Lagos where my parents live. I spend 200 nairas a day on transport alone.'*

Two hours later, Professor Amusu finally turns up. We then have a quick tour of the campus that has an average population of about 40,000 students, teachers, staff members and others. *'It's Lagos in miniature,'* explains Professor Amusu passing by a line of varied refreshment booths and stalls. Suddenly, there is a loud bang, but we quickly realise that a tyre has burst not far away, and our faces relax. The Professor smiles. *'We're still recovering from recent events[2]. The general feeling here is that we're living on a powder-keg. The university may have been generally preserved from ethnic and religious tensions, but that's separate. People are still prepared to kill one another for a 20-naira note.'*

The campus is marked by feverish activity. It's the time of the year when students sit examinations. The buildings are tumbledown, the classrooms are poorly equipped, and the number of qualified teachers has fallen. *'Until the mid-1980s,'* explains Professor Amusu, *'the teaching in this country was high quality. The University of Ibadan, for example, was modelled on the English system, and the pathways functioned – for example, a graduate from Nigeria could go and do a Master's in the UK. But the situation has deteriorated sharply since the mid-1980s. The Generals who came to power wanted just one thing: to line their pockets. By and large, those who had a chance to leave have done so. For those of us who remained behind, it has been extremely depressing. Colleagues have gone out of their mind because their American or European wives have decided to go back home.'*

When democracy returned in 1999, an improved education sector once more became a priority for the government. Or at least, that is what it said: the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has been able to demonstrate that the share of the national budget is actually smaller now than in the time of the Generals – just 7% – whereas UNESCO recommends a minimum of 26%. In 2001, the ASUU organised an effective strike, and the Federal Government gave in to a number of demands, starting with salary rises. But to the government's surprise, it did not keep the ASUU quiet, and the union has carried on making robust demands for global reforms. The temperature has continued to rise: President Obasanjo treats teachers as layabouts, and teachers retort that the soldiers[3] are ignorant types who know nothing about education.

Professor Amusu sees this freedom of expression as one of the few gains to have been made since 1999. *'At least we can criticise the government without being afraid of ending up in prison. After all, it is our role as intellectuals to fight against what we see as intolerable. The university teaching profession is completely devalued. We complain about it, but in primary and secondary education, it's even worse. When a teacher looks for lodgings, he is well advised to conceal what he does for a living. Frankly, you only take up teaching as a job if there's nothing left. There's a joke going the rounds: two neighbours are chatting away, and the first one asks, "What does your son do?" "Nothing at the moment," replies the second neighbour, "he's a teacher."* ◆

Jacky Delorme
Journalist

[1] A little over US$ 1.

[2] On 27 January, an ammunition store exploded in a barracks in Lagos killing almost 1000 people, and less than a week later, ethnic-religious trouble broke out in a district of Lagos called Idi-Araba, causing about 100 deaths.

[3] The current President is an ex-soldier.

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ICFTU General Secretary Guy Ryder

"We have to get across to people more effectively"

Mr Ryder, 45, was born in Liverpool, UK. He worked in the international department of the Great Britain's Trades Union Congress (TUC) from 1981 to 1985, then at the International Federation of Employees (FIET) in Geneva. From 1988 to 1998, he was subsequently Assistant Director and Director of the ICFTU's Geneva office. At the same time, he served as secretary of the Workers' Group of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office (ILO) in 1993-96 and 1996-98 and also secretary of the Workers' Group of the International Labour Conference in 1994-98. From 1998 he worked at the International Labour Office as Director of the Bureau for Workers' Activities and was appointed Chief of Cabinet of Director-General Juan Somavia in March 1999. He has been appointed acting General Secretary of the ICFTU on 21 November 2001, replacing Bill Jordan, who retired.

EI: You have been in the trade union world for a long time now, how would you describe today's world climate: is it union-friendly or not at all?

Well let me say that in the twenty or so years that I have been connected with the trade union movement, it would be difficult to recall a time when the world climate could be described as "friendly" towards the trade unions. There have always been major difficulties and they remain. What has changed, however, is the nature of the problems, in the context of the end of the Cold War and the era of the globalisation.

Today, the very basic task of organising is made difficult by a number of factors connected with the globalisation process. Unions are always confronted with the fact that where workers do organise effectively and where they do win certain conditions at work, it is open to capital and to companies to go somewhere else and undercut those gains. I think we can exaggerate the threat of the mobility of capital, though it can be real.

What is more problematic is that the globalisation process is encouraging employers to compete evermore sharply with each other, and basically to make labour a part of the process of winning a competitive advantage. Ultimately, competitive pressures come to bear directly on workers and on their trade unions. So in that sense, it is a hostile labour market as the market globalises.

The labour market is also fragmenting, look at the growing "informal economy" – this whole pool of unprotected and unrecognised working people who are denied the very basics of the rights and the conditions conferred by legal employment relationship.

There are also many governments, too many governments, who still believe that trade unions are an obstacle to making their economies more efficient. It is regrettable that they are encouraged in that view by some international organisations, in the context of the structural adjustment processes.

So that is the dark side of the moon ... the bright side is that there is a reaction against what we have come to call the "Washington consensus". There is a change in the tide: popular opinion realises that the types of policy and attitudes that I have just described are not good for working people and they are not good for their societies. They are not good for the co-active future.

EI: How do Global Unions position themselves in this anti-globalisation movement?

Let me answer with an example: in January, the Global Unions – and your General Secretary Fred van Leeuwen– went to the World Economic Forum meeting in New York and, at the same time, we went to Porto Alegre for the World Social Forum. We went to both with a single message, which is about globalising social justice. We talked at both events about a trade union agenda for globalisation.

The trade union movement needs to supersede the Yes/No globalisation dichotomy and shape globalisation that will benefit working people and societies: more equitable and more socially adjustable globalisation.

The trade union movement brings its own agenda and looks for partners to enhance it, and may find some of those in what might be called the anti-globalisation movement, but we also need to be speaking to governments, international organisations and to employers who are major actors in the globalisation process. So our position is more complex than a Yes/No.

EI: You are talking about "working with" rather than "Partnerships"?

No, partnership is fine. Partnerships, coalitions, joint actions, all these words ... are about sharing an issue. Trade unions are a major component of civil society. However, something distinguishes trade unions from many other NGOs: trade unions have membership structures and internal decision making processes. This allows us to say very clearly "We represent members".

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"We represent working people". This gives us an unparalleled legitimacy in dealing with any economic and social question. When Education International is raising its voice, it expresses concerns of 25 million teachers. Generally NGOs – and it is not a criticism of them, it is just an observation – cannot claim to represent people, in the same way that trade unions can. If we bear that distinction in mind, some of the hesitancies, which sometimes exist in the trade union movement about working with NGOs, can disappear. In conclusion, I think trade unions should have a closer and more dynamic partnership with NGOs.

International instruments and Social Justice

EI: Recent events have shown the lack of consistency in the work of intergovernmental agencies. Some say there is a hierarchy in international standards, with economic standards being more important than labour and environmental standards. How can Global Unions address this situation, and help the ILO to become stronger?

In the first place I think that the ILO is helping itself. Over the last four or five years, the ILO has moved from what was a rather marginalised position in the international policy debate to a much stronger one. There is however a long way still to go. The international trade union movement has every interest in having the ILO continue on this positive path. Now, we can help, by recognising and attributing to the ILO its real place and potential and encourage others to do so. The ILO is a key organisation in the international system on social issues and its potential is not exploited to the fullest. We have given a great deal of attention, and rightly so, to the trade and labour standards agenda, trying to have the WTO acknowledge its responsibilities in respect of social issues. Quite rightly, as well, we have worked hard on the IMF and the World Bank, on their policies and their impact on working people.

The real opportunity now, lies in joining all of these organisations together. They have tended to act as compartmentalised individual actors on the international scene, with incoherence as a result. The ILO has a pivotal role to play in making the international system coherent. The ILO world commission on social dimension to globalisation can be a vehicle to help involve the different international organisations in a more consistent approach to the social goals set by the UN Millennium summit.

More and more people nowadays understand that without addressing the issues that the ILO deals with, the approach to globalisation is going to remain incoherent and incomplete.

EI : The Millennium Review highlighted as priorities the recruitment of youth. Do you think the education currently provided in schools prepares youth to labour issues, to trade unionism, etc.

The focus of our youth campaign is to demonstrate to young people that trade union organisations are relevant to their live and interests. A trade union is something in which you can be active. Too often the perception of a young person coming into work, is that trade unions are organisations run for your benefit by other older people.

I do agree with you: most people at school and leaving school have probably no knowledge, experience or contact of trade unionism, or very little. I think given the way that people transition from school to work today, the first contact with trade unions becomes that evermore difficult, people are working in smaller work units where it is difficult for trade unions to be present. They may be going into informal activities, where they simply lie beyond the reach of normal formal structures.

I believe that it is terribly important to prepare people for working life at school, and not simply vocational training, as it is commonly understood, but actually all the social aspects of work.

I am not aware of any school, college or university curricular, that really treats these issues in any serious way. We really have to try to work on curricula. Trade unions should also be aware about how they can actually make this contact, be it at school or in that transition period from school into work.

We cannot afford to ignore the fact that the trade union is ageing. It means that people are either not entering the trade union movement as they come into the labour market, or they are doing so later. I don't think there is anything in the attitude of young people, which makes them hostile to trade unionism. We have to make the link.

EI : The last EI World Congress in July 2001 sent a strong message about the involvement of grassroots members in international campaigns ...

Absolutely, I think it is vital. I heard Fred van Leeuwen describing the "gatekeeper phenomenon". He said basically that we deal with a certain small group of people, who are " initiates " in international affairs. I feel the same way in the ICFTU. What we have to do is to make international work, national trade union work. One has the rather uneasy impression that international issues are a specialist subject for a limited number of people. We need to penetrate much more deeply in national structures. The whole logic of globalisation means that this is what should be happening anyway.

Our key area is communication. We have to be able to release information products that go straight down as far as possible to the grassroots organisations, and not for the sole consumption of international secretaries and specialists. Again, the issues that ICFTU deals with everyday, be it trade unions rights violations, multinational company activities, whatever it is, are very relevant to the local union activists. We have to get across to people more effectively. ◆

The Global Unions vehicle gives us visibility in the public mind. It is a good communications tool, but it is also a tremendously important platform for joint action and we all recognise the advantages that we can gain from close co-operation.

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Girl's education in Africa: FAWE's action at the grassroots

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Girls who complete only four years of schooling, are more likely to mature into women who are able to make sound decisions concerning family size, nutrition and health of their families, income generating ventures, and are far more likely to enrol their own children in schools.

In many cultures in Africa, particularly among the poor and urban slum dwellers, the birth of a daughter inspires little celebration while that of a boy is a time of rejoicing.

There is overwhelming evidence that in Africa, women are the foundation of life. This is due to their multiple and critical roles in the family as homemakers and caretakers; as producers and managers of food; and, as managers of environmental resources such as water and fuel. Their education is therefore of particular significance to this continent where economic and social development are heavily constrained by a complexity of factors including poverty, high population growth, armed conflict and the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Study after study has shown that in Africa, as in other developing regions of the world, education of women contributes to economic growth and poverty reduction. Yet, sub-Saharan Africa is doing poorly overall in enrolment, retention and performance of children in schools.

Today, 42 million children are out of school in sub-Saharan Africa. Approximately 60% of these are girls. Only 67% of children who enter grade one of primary school reach grade five. This means that a full one third drop out, the majority being girls. Reasons for girls' vulnerability and their low status in the community are heavily tied to discriminative cultural norms that favour boys in all aspects of growing up.

Discrimination from birth

Girls are expected to do the bulk of the household chores as well as care for their siblings. In homes experiencing acute poverty, girls are the first to be pulled out of school. In any case, staying at home is often viewed as important to prepare the girls for marriage, which is often at a very young age. Moreover, the long distances to schools particularly in rural areas, lack of separate facilities for girls in schools, and the predominantly male teaching staff constitute major barriers to girls' participation in education.

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FAWE's contribution to improving girls' education

FAWE was founded for the purpose of improving girls' participation in education in Africa. Following the 1990 Jomtien Declaration on Education For All (EFA), a small group of African women ministers of education and other influential African women policy makers concluded that additional efforts were required to address gender disparities in education in Africa if EFA was to become a reality. The group also recognised that women in decision-making and influential positions had the potential to make a significant difference in the education and training of women and girls in their countries. The resolutions of this historic meeting led to the founding of FAWE.

FAWE was officially registered in 1993 as a pan-African non-government organisation. It set itself the task of ensuring that girls' education becomes and remains an important item on national agendas and that education policies are gender responsive. FAWE works to ensure that programs targeting girls' education are well focussed and carefully designed for greatest impact. FAWE is working with a variety of partners to ensure implementation of a wide range of support that responds, in a comprehensive approach, to the multiple problems facing girls' education within a specific environment.

Influencing policy change

Through its powerful membership that includes ministers of education, university vice chancellors and senior education personnel, FAWE influences policy in favour of girls' education by advocating for adoption and effective implementation of key policies on gender issues. For example in November 2000, FAWE convened a meeting to consult with ministers of education and other key educationalists on country policies for curbing the dropout of girls. Concrete country strategies have resulted in specific policies being enacted in a number of countries, such as school re-entry for teenage mothers, policies on sexual harassment, boarding facilities for girls, awarding of bursaries etc.

Other earlier ministerial consultations were on building effective partnerships for girls' education in Africa

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(Dakar 1997) and adolescent pregnancy and school dropout (Mauritius 1994).

Through its Strategic Resource Planning project, FAWE has helped countries in Africa in identification of cost effective policy options for increasing girls' access to education.

Advocacy

The impact of FAWE's advocacy is evident at the highest policy levels, among senior and middle managers and all the way down to education practitioners, opinion leaders and girls and boys at the grassroots level.

FAWE's advocacy tools are designed to be target-specific. Besides meetings and publications, FAWE uses theatre, art, drama, girls' speak-out fora, films, songs and sports to increase awareness of the value of educating girls and to advocate for improved conditions and support for girls' education. This approach has had a big impact particularly in enlisting the support of local community leaders in solving girls' educational problems and improving retention rates for girls in rural areas.

Demonstrating what works for girls' education

One of FAWE's key strategies for intervention is demonstrating to all stakeholders what works to increase girls' access, retention and performance. FAWE does this through a number of ways the most significant one being the setting up of special schools - Centres of Excellence - where the best practices and proven strategies are applied together as a package.

FAWE's experience has shown that individual interventions, offered on piecemeal basis, were not adequately responding to the educational needs of learners. For example, giving bursaries to girls from poor rural homes, one of FAWE's key interventions, would be of little benefit if the only schools available are day schools and are far from home, a common feature of rural Africa; or if the family of the girl is not well sensitised or have intentions of marrying off the girl at an early age. Similarly, equipping a school with teaching and learning resources would not have the desired impact, if teachers are poorly trained, are not gender sensitised or are demoralised due to poor working conditions.

In 1999, FAWE launched Centres of Excellence - special schools set up to demonstrate how concerns in girls' education can be addressed holistically. These schools are currently located in Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Senegal. The Centres of Excellence take an integrated approach to solving the problem of providing quality education for girls by applying a package of effective strategies, with special focus given to the unique circumstances facing girls in the particular area.

For example, the centre in Rwanda was founded in 1999, a time when the country was still reeling in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide. In view of this, peace and reconciliation are integral components of the school's curriculum. Students are constantly sensitised and educated on the value of peace and coexistence. In Kenya, on the other hand, the centre is located in an area notorious for marrying off girls at a tender age. The focus here is on sensitisation of the community, especially parents and community leaders on the value of girls' education and the dangers of early marriage. There is much emphasis on guidance and counselling, particularly for girls rescued from such marriages who may be psychologically traumatised.

Significant components of the centre's package are:

- Provision of adequate physical facilities
- Provision of adequate learning materials
- Awarding bursaries
- Relevant curriculum
- Skilled teachers
- Community sensitisation
- Empowerment of girls
- Guidance and counselling
- Effective and efficient management system for the centre
- Use of information technology systems

Sharing communities' innovative initiatives

FAWE looks within the communities' for innovative initiatives and experimental achievements that are working on the ground to promote female education and that have potential for wider application. The identification and recognition of these initiatives is undertaken in two ways: through an award system for outstanding innovators – the Agathe Uwilingiyimana Prize and through a competitive grant program. ◆

FAWE 5TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY - NAIROBI, KENYA, 6-10 JULY 2002

The theme is Girls' Education: Action at the Grassroots is in line with the action plan adopted by the Dakar World Conference on Education (2000) which made an urgent plea to countries to move from rhetoric to action on the ground. The goal of the FAWE Assembly is to take stock of the achievements, experiences and constraints that its 33 National Chapters across sub-Saharan Africa have faced in their efforts to reach the grassroots with practical and relevant solutions aimed at increasing access and providing quality education for girls. This follows FAWE's intensive training of national teams in nine of its national chapters to ensure that there is gender mainstreaming in the on-going formulation of the EFA National Action Plans. The meeting will focus on four areas: poverty, negative cultural practices, safety and security of girls in conflict areas and HIV/AIDS. The assembly will be concerned with issues of integration, replication and mainstreaming of proven interventions into national education systems. Like in earlier assemblies, schoolgirls have been invited to give their views and opinions on problems besetting them and what solutions they envisage for them.

Lack of separate facilities for girls in schools and the predominantly male teaching staff constitute major barriers to girls' participation in education.

GIRLS' VOICES ON ...

EARLY MARRIAGE

Even if I am not in school, is it right to give me away as early as 10 years? Is my body ready? Do I know what marriage is all about? I am only a child!

Evelyne Kuyioto, 11 years - Kenya

DISCRIMINATION

I was in class 3 when my father lost his job. The situation got worse at home and I had to drop out to help my mother sell vegetables by the roadside. My younger brother continued with school. How I yearn to be in his shoes! But mum says we have to work hard to get money to pay for his fees.

Mercy Chilesha, 9 years - Zambia

RIGHTS TO BE HEARD

We must make sure we are not only seen but heard
Why do we think of ourselves as useless
Why, Why girls?
Rise, stand up and show them who we are
Show them we are capable of doing what they think only they can

Gladys Chiseremo, 15 years - Zimbabwe

BIASED TEACHING METHODS

While boys are trained to do wiring practically, we girls are told to write notes
So we have no chance of knowing how to do wiring in a house, let alone driving a tractor

School girls - Tanzania

SINGLE SEX SCHOOLS

No harassment by boys or male teachers
No rape cases
Our own toilets and bathrooms and no dressing-rooms
Free to express ourselves in class without teasing from boys
No competition in dressing among us to attract boys
I could go on and on!

Lombe A. Mwamba, 16 years, - Zimbabwe

Professor Penina Mlama
FAWE Executive Director

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Teachers at the forefront of HIV/AIDS global prevention efforts

Since 1994, EI has participated in the global HIV/AIDS prevention efforts within an alliance formed with the World Health Organization (WHO), Education Development Center (EDC), the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), UNESCO and others. Our efforts have contributed to a measurable impact in many targeted nations.

In the early stages of our co-ordinated efforts, focus was on organisation of international and regional conferences and seminars on school health and HIV/AIDS prevention. EI and its partners are now shifting focus to the development of national HIV/AIDS prevention programs to strengthen efforts to prevent HIV, sexually transmitted infections (STI), and discrimination against those effected.

The first set of programs was launched in April 2001 in three Southern African countries: Botswana, Malawi and Zambia. In January 2002, seven programs were initiated in West Africa (Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali and Senegal), Central Africa (Rwanda) and Haiti. These programs essentially concentrated on teacher training to enable teachers to acquire the skills they need to prevent HIV/STI, help students avoid infection and reduce related discrimination against HIV infected persons. The training has focused on effective teaching methods and the use of interactive learning experiences in classroom.

In February 2002, EI with WHO and EDC visited the teacher's unions in Botswana, Malawi and Zambia in order to assess the implementation of their programs. The delegation examined the extent to which teachers are now trained to prevent their own infection, advocate for effective programs, help young people obtain the skills they need and support the development of school health programs.

The situation in Zambia

According to UNAIDS, Zambia is one of the hardest hit countries in the world-wide HIV/AIDS pandemic. HIV infection is currently estimated at almost 20% for people above 15. This means that one in five Zambian adults will probably die at a young age from this disease[1]. HIV prevalence rates range from 36 percent to 58 percent among high-risk groups. The country currently has one of the lowest life expectancy rates in Africa: 37 for males and 38 years for females. Seroprevalence rates are at their highest in the urban areas of the Copperbelt, Lusaka and Central Provinces, but there is no part of the country in which the reported rates are low. Zambia's total population is projected to reach 11.5 million in 2010, having lost 4.2 million persons to AIDS[2].

Delphine Sanglan
HIV/AIDS
Program Assistant

The Zambian education system has seriously deteriorated over the last twenty years due to economic decline, lack of resources and institutional inefficiencies. The HIV/AIDS crisis further undermines the educational system by significantly increasing teacher absences, attrition rates and causing dramatic increases in the number of school-age orphans. 56,000 Zambian primary school students lost a teacher in 1999[3]. At the macro-level, there will be fewer pupils to educate in the long term as AIDS ravishes the young population[4].

Young people are a high-risk group for HIV infection. Three quarters of boys are sexually active by 14 and many youth have multiple partners. The majority of them practice unsafe sex. Hence the school seems to be the most appropriate place to deliver relevant information and messages about HIV/AIDS prevention, and teachers or the best persons to reach out to all of these young people.

The Zambia National Union of Teachers (ZNUT) has realised the urgent need to train teachers to be able to educate school children about school health and HIV/AIDS prevention.

EI program on school health and HIV/AIDS prevention in Zambia

To contribute to the HIV/AIDS prevention efforts in Zambia, ZNUT has launched a program on school health and HIV/AIDS prevention in April 2001. ZNUT is the largest teachers' union in Zambia with over 40,000 members countrywide comprising primary, secondary and college teachers. This program, which received the support and the cooperation of the ministries of health and education, is expected to reach the 40,000 unionised teachers through training seminars at the national, regional and district level over the next three years.

An evaluation of the program in February 2002 showed that it is on the right track. Thirty trainers from nine Zambian provinces were trained at the national level on sex and sexuality, health education, care and prevention. Skill-building activities were practised during the training to break the ice, develop a climate of confidence among future trainers and deal with real classroom situations.

The trainers are now resource-persons in training seminars in their provinces. Their task is now to train others in turn who will train teachers in the country's districts.

Trained teachers are aware of their leading role as a "model" for the education sector. They take this role to heart and talk about it with passion. With the training provided, they feel more comfortable in the classroom to take

1 Kelly, M.J., The Impact of HIV/AIDS on Schooling in Zambia. Paper presented at 11th International Conference on AIDS and STDs in Africa (ICASA), September 1999.
2 Hunter & Williamson, 1997, Figure A-1.
3 UNICEF, The Progress of Nations 2000
4 Kelly, M.J. ibid.

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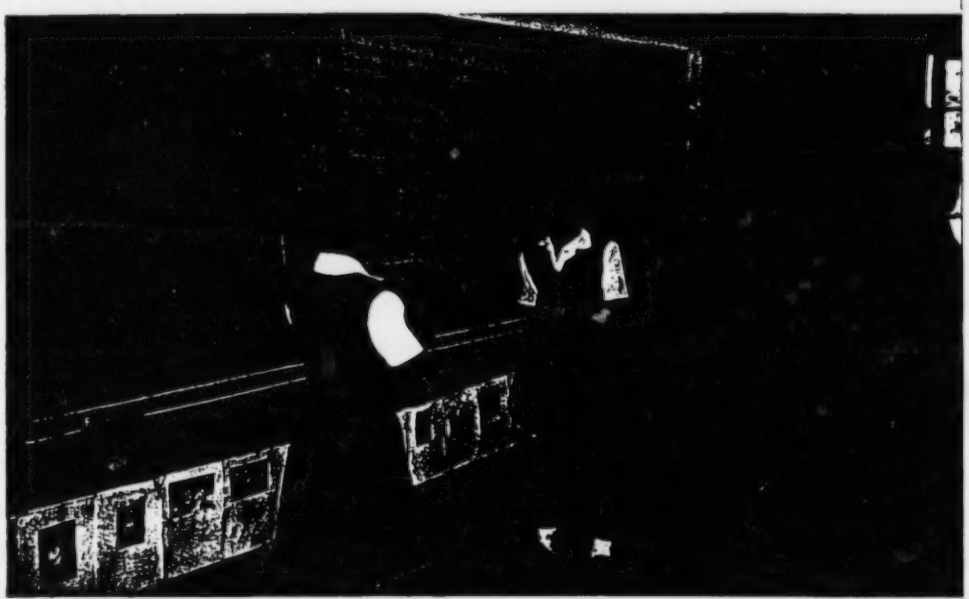

School children during an HIV/AIDS session at the Mafitlhakgosi Primary school, Tlokweng, Botswana.
© EI/DS

up the issues of sexuality, sexually transmitted diseases, safe sex and the use of condoms. They are more able to train young people by establishing a climate of confidence and encouraging them to express their concerns and to protect themselves against HIV. They get around taboos and can better justify arguments regarding the use of condoms and behaviour to be adopted to avoid HIV infection.

In the primary schools visited, EI observed that students were sensitised on HIV/AIDS issues. There is now a generally good understanding about HIV/AIDS (how the virus is caught, how to avoid the infection, etc.). Despite their young age, students know what a condom is and how it should be used. They feel they have been given a leadership role to play in transmitting their knowledge to their family circle and friends.

With these countrywide teacher training seminars, all links in the chain are approached: from teachers to families through students. Finally, the whole community is reached and sensitised to HIV/AIDS prevention.

ZNUT in partnership with "Vision Arts", a multi-disciplinary artistic group, has also developed an anti-AIDS drama project called "Passion Free". This educational drama relates the story of Sam and Judith which starts when they are in college studying to become secondary school teachers until they get married, have a baby who is HIV positive and question themselves on their HIV status. The main objective of this drama project is to encourage responsible sexual behaviour in adolescents as a means to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS infection amongst students, teachers and the general public. "Passion free" will soon be performed in schools across the country and is striving to reach over 50,000 students. ◆

ZNUT members and teacher trainers in the Neem Tree Upper Basic school, Kabwe, Central Province, Zambia.
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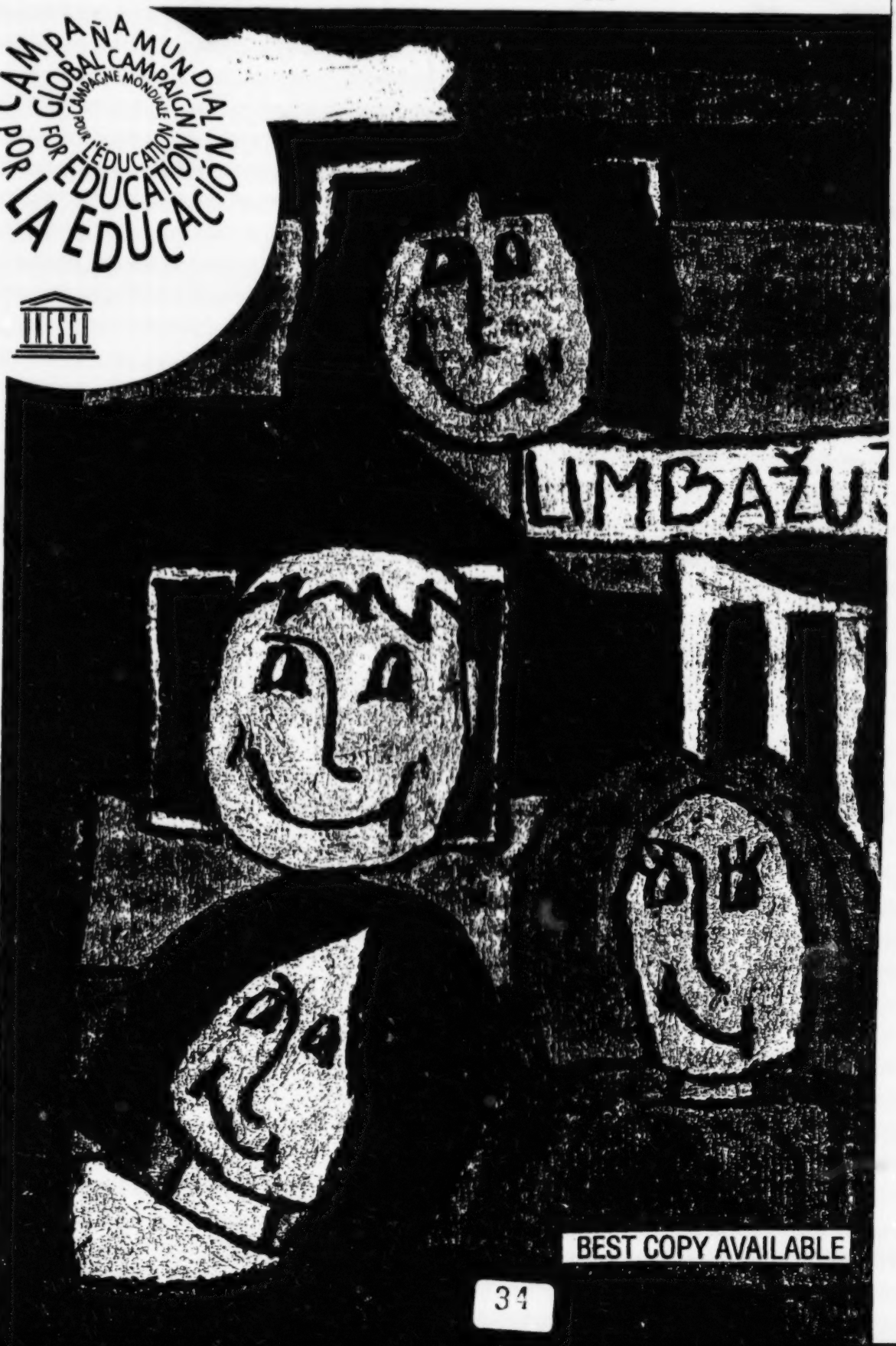
The third Global Action Week (22-28 April 2002) featured, among other activities, children's drawing competitions. Children aged 6 to 12 were invited to draw or paint pictures showing "What I want to be when I grow-up". Paula Turka submitted this beautiful drawing, age 10, from Latvia. In caption, Paula put "When I will be grown up, all the children in school will be happy".



National drawing competitions culminated in public events during the Global Action Week in about 50 countries.
http://www.ei-ie.org

The drawing competition was a Global Campaign for Education and UNESCO initiative

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